

CHRISTIAN COURIER

REDEEMER UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LIBRARY

CHRISTIAN COURIER
PER/BX/9401/.C36

SEP 19 2006

No. 2798 \$2.00

September 11, 2006

Hitchhiking around
Cuba....p.12

They must be angels! ...p. 13



60th year of publication

More Iraqis being killed in sectarian violence than by insurgency

Harry der Nederlanden

A number of critics of US policy in Iraq have long been urging the administration to speed up the training of Iraqis so they can shoulder a greater share of the responsibility for keeping order and suppressing terrorist attacks. That process of drawing down American troops and transferring patrol duties to Iraqis has been happening over the last few months. It has, however, not led to greater peace but to a huge increase in violence, especially in Baghdad.

According to Dexter Filkins of the *New York Times*, in June 2005 Americans were making about four times as many patrols per day as they were in mid-February of this year, a decrease of almost 75 percent. More and more such actions were left to Iraqis.

At the same time, however, the number of killings per day have climbed at a similar rate, reaching a level almost four times last year's average. As a result, the US was forced to reverse its program and instead of decreasing the number of troops in Baghdad, it doubled them. To do so, it had to extend the stint of 3,700 soldiers, who were about to go home, by an extra four months. It also recalled to active duty about 2,500 retired marines. Not a very popular move.

Most of the killings and bombings of the last few months are attributed to sectarian violence. We have long been seeing attacks on Shiite shrines and markets. At first these were interpreted to be acts of terrorism by al Qaeda groups and other insurgents who were trying to incite sectarian strife between Shiites and Sunnis. For a long time, the Shiites exercised considerable restraint and did not retaliate, at least not on a large scale.

But the attacks and killings did



Iraq - all the king's horses and all the king's men couldn't put Humpty Dumpty together again

not stop. Earlier this year, it became obvious that Shiite death squads were holding Sunnis responsible. They are now responsible for at least as many killings as the Sunnis. Sectarian killings in July accounted for most of the nearly 3,500 deaths in Iraq, the highest monthly toll since the invasion in 2003.

Although critics of the Bush administration have long declared the imminence of civil war between sectarian groups in Iraq, now even some who have long backed the administration are warning the country is on the brink of a civil war; in fact, it may already be underway. Entire neighborhoods are being subjected to ethnic cleansing in Baghdad and other cities. Sunnis are fleeing to all-Sunni neighborhoods for security and Shiites to all-Shiite neighborhoods.

The city had been growing so violent that, according to one Iraqi, a couple kissing in the street was shot by a fundamentalist who frowned on public canoodling.

a young government employee who had quit his job in Baghdad and was moving his family to Jordan. "Death is near the door of any innocent civilian just because he prays in a different way."

So much killing has been going on that some take advantage of the chaos to wreak personal revenge. A number of professors, for example, have been killed for failing students.

Baghdad was being turned into an sectarian slaughterhouse, with an average of some 100 people per day being butchered by one faction or another. Killings were being

carried out in broad daylight, according to Filkins, with sectarian militias displaying no fear of the police. In fact, police seemed to be afraid to intervene – even in blatantly criminal activity like kidnappings.

Most of the killings over the last few months have been Iraqi on Iraqi, as every faction is much more intent on killing each other rather than fighting American troops. The Iraqi government seemed to be doing little to stop the escalating violence. So to prevent the cycle of retaliation from exploding into a full-scale civil war, the US blanketed Baghdad with extra troops. The infusion of more troops into Baghdad did succeed in decreasing sectarian killing, but it also brought the

Continued on p. 2...

Criticism of Hezbollah rises in Lebanon

Harry der Nederlanden

Lebanon has insisted that it will patrol its own border with Syria to prevent the rearming of Hezbollah. Lebanese Prime Minister Fouad Siniora assured Kofi Annan, during the latter's visit to that country, that Lebanon is serious about enforcing the sole authority of the Lebanese army on its territory. But he admitted to Annan that it would be impossible to disarm Hezbollah militarily without starting another major conflagration in the country.

Writing in the *National Post*, Douglas Davis, a former editor of the *Jerusalem Post*, charges that France has so diluted the UN mandate for the troops being sent as peacekeepers that they will provide little or no protection for Israel against Hezbollah attacks, while making retaliation by Israel

much more difficult.

Europe has pledged up to 7,000 additional troops for the peacekeeping mission, with 2,000 coming from France and 3,000 from Italy. The UN has asked for 15,000 troops. French President Jacques Chirac thought the number excessive, which may be true – if they do nothing but stand by and watch like the last UN mission.

Meanwhile, within the Lebanese government, according to several reports, the war has deepened the polarization between those oriented to the West and those oriented to the Islamic world. Those who are pro-Western blame Hezbollah for provoking a war that was wholly contrary to Lebanon's interests and acting solely on behalf of Syria and Iran.

The UN reported that some 15,000 homes were destroyed

Nasrallah
Hezbollah leader

in Lebanon during the month-long conflict, leaving about 3,000 families homeless.

Most of the displaced, it seems, have found other places to stay, usually with family in another part of the country. Hezbollah is giving US\$12,000 to every family that can prove its home was destroyed to pay the rent till their places are rebuilt. Qatar and Saudi Arabia have both promised to help in reconstruction.

Amir Taheri, writing in the *Wall Street Journal*, complains that the outcome of the war has been

See Lebanon p. 2...



News

Is Iraq another Vietnam?

Harry der Nederlanden

Stephen Biddle, Senior Fellow in Defense Policy at the Council on Foreign Relations, warns that it is a costly error to approach Iraq as if it were another Vietnam. US troops are not facing a popular insurgency like the one mounted by Maoists in Vietnam. Much of the violence happening now is a low-grade civil war.

Yet, the strategy pursued by the Bush administration is similar to that used in Vietnam. The US is fostering democratic reform and economic reconstruction in an attempt to win the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people for the central government. At the same time it is training Iraqi soldiers and policemen to take over the task of fighting the insurgents.

However, argues Biddle, most of the killings happening now have nothing to do with an insurgency. It is Sunnis killing Shiites and vice versa, and sometimes even factions within either camp fighting one another for power.

This is not a war in which nationalist ideology and a war of ideas plays a major role. This is a communal civil war in which there is little or no chance of changing minds. It is about each sectarian group seeking to dominate.

Such wars are usually motivated by fear, he says, fear that if the other side gains dominance, they will make life hard or impossible for you.

Until recently most of the violence was committed by Sunnis or by al-Qaeda type groups sheltered by Sunnis. And much of it was directed against the Iraqi military and police, which are largely Shiite and Kurd in makeup. When violence is directed against

American troops, it is because they are seen as defenders of the Shiite-dominated government.

Given this situation, says Biddle, the two strategies that are effective against an insurgency – rapid democratization and Iraqization of the police and military – only increase fear and violence. In other words, the very policies that everyone has been urging on the administration are inflaming the situation. Democratization has resulted in deepening the polarization, as the elections became little more than a competition for dominance over the other. Iraqization of the army is seen by Sunnis as giving the Shiites and the Kurds the power to destroy them or reduce them to second-class citizens. They do not feel protected by such an army but threatened.

Some critics, indeed, charge that often the Iraqi military and police often function not as a defense force for the entire nation but as a Shiite militia.

Biddle argues that rather than call for an acceleration of Iraqization of the military, the US should hold off. It should use it as leverage to frighten the Sunnis into cooperating with the central government. To simplify Biddle's strategy, the US should in essence threaten to leave them at the mercy of the Shiites and Kurds if they don't shape up.

Eight prominent analysts took the time to interact with Biddle's article in *Foreign Affairs*. Almost all of them were in broad agreement with Biddle's analysis of the present quandary, except that a couple reminded him that

the present "low grade" civil war would result in almost 20,000 civilian deaths per year. That's not something that can go on.

But there's little agreement among the well-read respondents about the way out of the present violence, except that they're all doubtful whether even their own proposals will avert disaster. Let me give you a flavor of the high-level discussion.

Larry Diamond, a Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution, thinks that the Sunnis will not be so easily manipulated, and with most of the others feels that the US simply doesn't have very much leverage any more.

He concludes on a rather despairing note: "For some time now, and with growing urgency and poignancy, I have had a sinking feeling that the situation is headed for disaster no matter what Washington does at this point. If the United States pulls out fast, there will be all-out, horrific, regionally spreading civil war. If it stays indefinitely, it will incur more casualties, run through an additional \$8 billion per month, grind down the American military machine, and help al Qaeda's recruitment efforts – all simply to watch Iraq burn slowly rather than quickly."

Like Diamond, Chaim Kaufmann, Professor of International Relations at Lehigh University, also agrees with Biddle's diagnosis but dismisses any power-sharing solution as unworkable. Kaufmann suspects that by now the distrust among the parties is so deep that the effort to establish a central, unified government is futile. The Shiites are now so strong, they no longer feel the need to compromise

And recently there have been some fierce battles between the Iraqi army and the so-called Mahdi Army of al-Sadr, the radical Shiite cleric who controls the poor neighborhoods of Baghdad. Iraqi leaders fear that his undisciplined but numerous militia is becoming a state-within-a-state like Hezbollah in Lebanon. American leaders expressed the fear that other militias might be inspired by Hezbollah to follow their example, for in the Arab streets Hezbollah leader Nasrallah is being celebrated as a hero, despite the terrible cost to Lebanon.

An encouraging sign was Nasrallah's admission that had he known the destruction the

action would spark, he would not have seized the Israeli soldiers on July 12. In another instance of self-criticism, Ghazi Hamad, a prominent Hamas official said that much of the blame for the chaos in Gaza belongs to Palestinians themselves. "Gaza is suffering under the yoke of anarchy and the swords of thugs," wrote Hamad, a spokesman for the current Hamas government, in an article in *Al Ayyam*, the Palestinian newspaper. He lamented that Palestinians had not taken advantage of the Israeli pullout a year ago but was spoiled by gangs of thugs, referring to the militias that have continued to plague Gaza.



to accommodate the Sunnis. He suggests that the US military instead assist in the relocation of Iraqis who now live in hostile territory just to save lives.

While agreeing with much of the analysis, Leslie Gelb, President Emeritus of the Council on Foreign Relations, suggests that there is still some hope. But the only option left to the US may be decentralization – a loose federation that does not result in partition but that gives each ethnic group a high degree of independence. Each group would be free to pursue its respective goals, while the federal government would have limited responsibilities for foreign relations, defense and distributing oil revenues.

Several of the respondents, however, wondered whether even this minimalist goal was attainable, since oil-sharing remains an unresolved issue. The widely published columnist, Christopher Hitchens, long a defender of the war, observes glumly: "Unfortunately, the chief aim of the insurgency (directly descended from Saddam Hussein's own practice of divide and rule) has already been partly accomplished. Though there are many Iraqis who

do not think in tribal or confessional terms – and we owe something to these people too – the scene is now dominated by sectarians and by sectarianism."

Fred Kaplan, columnist for *Slate*, warns against assuming "that we have a can opener – that the United States has the military power, diplomatic leverage, and political sagacity to implement various schemes or to pressure the Iraqis into doing so." In other words, the US may play a fine tune, but what if no one wants to dance? Kaplan agrees with James Dobbins that it is no longer realistic to speak of achieving democracy in Iraq, much less about spreading it throughout the region. The US should be content if it is able to avert a full-scale civil war that does not drag in neighboring countries on opposing sides.

Both Diamond and Gelb suggest that a regional effort at mediation might still bear some fruit, and it might work toward a fluid federal system like that proposed by Gelb. This might keep the factions from one another's throats without partitioning the country, which would only result in even greater conflict about how to divide the pie.

Iraq...continued from p. 1
troops into collision with the militia of Muqtada al-Sadr.

When questioned by a committee of the US Senate, General John Abizaid, commander of US forces in the Middle East said that "the arming of independent militias and the subsequent undermining of state institutions is the curse of the region. If this century is to be dominated by non-state actors with no responsibility to the international community [to say nothing of their own], we are in for even greater dangers." He blamed Iran for arming the extremist militias.

The Iraq government has pledged to disarm the militias.

Lebanon....continued from p. 1

reported as a victory for Hezbollah, also in the West. Not so, he argues. He points out that the so-called victory parades orchestrated by Hezbollah were poorly attended in Lebanon. After a few days of "great-victory" rhetoric by Nasrallah, however, the voices of critics have become much louder. Hence, Nasrallah's public admission that had he known the scale of the destruction that resulted, he would not have authorized the raid into Israel and the kidnapping of the Israeli soldiers.

Mona Fayed, a prominent Shiite academic in Beirut, asked in a Shiite newspaper: "Who is a Shiite in Lebanon today?" She provided a sarcastic answer: "A Shiite is he who takes his instructions from Iran, terrorizes fellow believers into silence, and leads the nation into catastrophe without consulting anyone."

According to Taheri, the leader of the Shiite community in Lebanon (Hezbollah is Shiite), Sayyed Ali al-Amin, criticized Hezbollah for provoking the war, and he denied that Hezbollah spoke or acted on behalf of the entire Shiite community. Taheri also countered claims that in the rest of the Arab world Hezbollah is seen as the vanguard of the Shiite revival. He says it is seen as a toll of Iran and as a Khomeinist trojan horse.

Politics

Darfur insecurity much worse than last year

NAIROBI, 10 Aug 2006 (IRIN) – Insecurity has worsened significantly across the Darfur region in the first half of this year compared with the same period last year, according to a senior United Nations official.

"The number of armed clashes during that period was twice as high as the number last year," said Jan Pronk, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General to Sudan.

Attacks against the UN decreased by 10 percent, mainly because UN personnel were moving less outside towns due to insecurity, Pronk said. The number of attacks on NGOs, however, was 75 percent higher and attacks against peacekeepers of the African Union (AU) went up by 900 percent.

"The result is an increase in displaced people, with 40,000 more than last year," Pronk stressed.

The special envoy warned that the situation had deteriorated particularly in the three months since the signing of the May 5 Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) between the Sudanese government and the largest of the three main rebel factions, the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A), under the command of Minni Minnawi.

Since the signing of the Agreement, violence has been widespread across Darfur due to the fragmentation of various rebel groups and escalating fighting between the signatories and the non-signatories. Banditry and general lawlessness are rife and militias, rebel groups and government forces have clashed regularly.

The peace deal also has little popular support among civilians in Darfur, many of whom continue to live in camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refuse to return to their villages for fear of renewed attacks. Tension in many of the camps for the region's two million IDPs has steadily risen.

Despite the escalating violence, Pronk observed that the AU had investigated very few ceasefire violations since the beginning of May. "These investigations are hardly taking place because people – representatives of the parties [the Sudanese government and Minnawi's SLM/A] – are not there," he said. "So you see a complete stalemate – and that is one of my major worries."

According to a report by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, not a single investigation into cease-fire violations had taken place since mid-June.

The report found that although fighting between Sudan's armed forces and Minnawi's SLM/A faction lessened after the signing of the DPA, attacks on civilians by militias and rebel factions continued unabated, mainly in South and North Darfur.

Furthermore, the signing of the Peace Agreement had not resulted in a decline in sexual attacks on women. Especially in North Darfur violence against women has escalated, because they are seen to be supporting opposing factions of the rebel movement, says the report. The increase was also a result of the suspension of firewood patrols pro-

Change

The more things change, the more they stay the same. Regular readers of *Principalities and Powers* will notice a bit of a change in this corner of CC over the next while. I will be writing on behalf of David Koyzis who is enjoying some much needed rest for the next three months. However, while there will be a change from the regular, bow-tie wearing author of this column to someone with different fashion sensibilities, I hope that the quality of writing, and your enjoyment of it, remains the same. In my limited time here, I hope to take readers on a bit of a retro tour; we will revisit some countries and political situations that were regular newsmakers in the sixties to the early nineties and which seem to be popping up in the news again.

The country for which the first line of this article is perhaps most true is Russia. There certainly has been a great deal of change in Russia over the past twenty-five years or so; some of this change has been for the better, some for the worse. The days of constant nuclear tensions between the USSR and the US are largely a fading memory along with the KGB and the totalitarian communist government of Russia. At the same time, there are some significant problems.

Russia – which many believe defeated the Nazis in World War II because of the sheer numbers of people that it could muster to fight the enemy – is in the midst of a birthrate crisis. The low birthrate combined with a high death rate means that Russia's population is declining rapidly. The number of Russians choosing to abort their babies is one major reason for this decline – a fact that underlines the assertion that abortion is not simply a moral question but also a political question.

It seems that when it comes to politics in Russia, the old saying that "the more things change, the more they stay the same" is particularly true. This is especially true of the Russian style of political leadership. Russia has a long history of centralized, authoritarian leadership that is quite different from



Principalities & Powers

Brian Dijkema

our understanding of democracy. Catherine II of Russia, better known as Catherine the Great, is famous for the impact of her centralizing style of government, strict control over economic and public life, censorship and the expansion of Russian territory and influence. In fact, a painting of Catherine has the word "autocratix" painted onto the royal orb in her hand.

The communist period continued this trend in a more sinister fashion. Today, Vladimir Putin seems to be continuing this Russian tradition. He has taken steps to focus more of Russia's political power in himself and has been criticized for censoring the media and silencing political opposition. It seems as if the Russian tradition of strong centralized leadership focused on the advancement of Russia is alive and well – democracy, as we know it, is a tradition that has not thrived in Russia.

While there are certainly many reasons for this development, some (including a familiar bow-tie wearing professor of politics) have pointed out that one source of this style of leadership has roots in one particular Christian tradition of politics, particularly that of the church father Eusebius of Caesaria. Eusebius believed that the ascension of Constantine as Roman emperor ushered in the kingdom of God on earth and that the emperor was God's instrument on earth. This understanding of political leadership thrived in the Orthodox Church and made a significant impact on the shaping of those countries which are primarily orthodox, including Russia.

Interestingly, the same did not occur in the west where the struggle for leadership between church leaders and political leaders led to an understanding of differentiated authorities – a key first step to the development of democracy.

Brian Dijkema works for the Christian Labour Association of Canada and studies political theory at the Institute for Christian Studies.

vided by African Union troops outside IDP camps. The African forces withdrew from various locations after demonstrations in the camps in which the troops were attacked by angry refugees.

More than 200 women have been sexually assaulted in the past five weeks alone around Kalma camp, Darfur's largest. The women have no choice but to leave the relative safety of their camp to search for firewood – forcing them to walk several miles into the bush. If men went

instead, they would be killed. "We have chosen to risk being raped rather than let the men risk being killed," one woman said.

"Without additional government support, the Darfur Peace Agreement is doomed to failure, with the population of Darfur continuing to suffer grave violations of human rights as violence among competing armed groups in Darfur persists," the report warned.

The UN Security Council is discussing a draft resolution to

replace an understaffed African Union peacekeeping force with a larger and more effective UN mission to restore peace in Darfur.

The African Union, whose mandate expires at the end of September, has requested the transfer of its mission to the UN, saying it is unable to sustain a long-term peacekeeping operation. But Sudanese President Umar al-Bashir remains opposed and has warned that Sudan's army would fight any UN forces sent to Darfur.



As one door closes, another always opens.

When employment ends, there are important decisions to be made. I can help you evaluate your alternatives.

Call us for our free Life Event Report, *Job Loss: Where to begin when your employment ends* and get tips on how to manage your finances and help you decide what doors are open to you.



CLARENCE WEIMA, CFP
Executive Financial Consultant
clarence.weima@investorsgroup.com
Phone: 1-800-488-9817
The Plan
by **Investors Group**
Investors Group Financial Services Inc.

**Investments owned by S&P Financial Inc. and licensed to its subsidiary corporations.

SP1105

Editorial

Remembering 9-11 and the face of God

Harry der Nederlanden

A great many things have happened on September 11 over the years within recent memory, but nowadays we can't say September 11 or 9-11 without thinking of the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center and having the images flash briefly before our eyes. It was not something many of us experienced directly – I mean in terms of its personal impact on us. How many of our readers were in New York City on that date and how many lost a friend or relative?

Five years ago on September 11, I had just come out of surgery for bowel cancer and had a foot-long zipper of stitches running down my belly. Bert Witvoet was holding down the office in my absence. I did, however, manage to produce a short editorial from my hospital bed. Before the surgery, in anticipation of weeks of convalescence and chemotherapy followed by radiation, I had bought a laptop and couldn't wait to try it out. The laptop was a bit hard on the stitches at first, but I couldn't have done without it. It enabled me to resume my duties for the next issue. Thinking back, I now recall that I had also bought a big fat book by Anthony Thistleton in case I couldn't sleep at night. It was guaranteed to induce sleep – a history of hermeneutics. I never did finish that book.

All these very personal memories I had to dredge up on purpose – even though they are part of my own 9-11. Like most of you, when I hear "September 11", I think not of my own experience, but of the images that came to us via television. On the day it actually happened, I didn't feel up to seeing those images. It wasn't until a few days later that I saw the footage of the airliners hitting the towers and the towers collapsing in on themselves.

It did not happen in Canada, it did not happen to any of us – yet it has been deeply etched into our consciousness. I wanted to say that it really wasn't part of our personal experience, but part of a collective experience. However, the latter, too, becomes very much part of our personal experience.

It does not diminish the meaning of this terrorist attack to remind ourselves that there have been many horrific acts and events that have killed far more people. Both the Rwanda and the Darfur genocides have been far more lethal. The same is true of the war in the Congo. Each one is the equivalent of several hundred Twin Towers.

Yet, these events, though even more gruesome, have not been inscribed in our memories and passed into our language in such a familiar formula: five years later, we have only to name the day of the month.

No doubt that has something to do with the unexpectedness of the strike and its suddenness. The others were, relatively speaking, long drawn-out processes. Whittling away at an entire people week after week, month after month seems less shocking somehow. In the Sudan it has become almost business as usual. We've been reading stories and seeing pictures of Darfur for about three years now while people cry Genocide. Killing a couple of thousand people in a few minutes in a spectacular manner is, in the era of television, much more heinous than killing them a few dozen at a time by more usual methods. The Twin Towers made for good television – and the terrorists were quite aware of that.

The fact that the perpetrators sacrificed their lives in the attacks adds to the impact. There's no denying that suicide attacks have been effective ways of killing large numbers of people wherever the tactic has been used. But in this day and age, explosives are small enough that they could be tossed quite effectively as well, giving the bomber a chance to escape. Having the bomber blow him- or herself up at the same time, however, adds a whole other dimension to the act. It lends a certain absoluteness to this act of hatred and repudiation.

It blasts a big black hole in all our Western attempts at toleration, multiculturalism and mutual accommodation. It is a totalist, all-or-nothing statement. In it the true believer is wholly integrated into the absolute will of an absolute deity. His selfhood is literally annihilated in an act that repudiates the right of any other way of life before the face of this god. It declares in very literal terms, not only that those who live by any other law don't deserve to live, but also that those who are truly faithful should choose to die rather than to tolerate contamination by other ways of life.

We in the West sometimes mouth similar slogans: "Live free or die." But we have learned to remind ourselves that this involves a commitment to the difference of the other person. Our freedom depends on his freedom.

There is a certain theocratic totalism in Christianity as well, especially in Calvinism. We say that God demands the totality of our lives and that he demands total obedience. And those who turn their backs on God's covenant are turning their backs on freedom and on life itself – indeed, they are following the way that leads to death and destruction.

In the ears of a secular liberal that sounds every bit as absolute and fundamentalist as the Islamist version. Why doesn't it generate the same sort of militant intolerance? Is it simply because Christians have been taught to compromise by the presence of dissident groups? Have they simply lost the power to force their beliefs on others?

That may be part of the truth. Christians have been forced to learn from other traditions too. But the accommodation to the rights of others also comes from within the Christian faith: in the Ten Commandments we are converted not only to God but also to the welfare of our neighbor. And this is repeated with a new emphasis in The Beatitudes. Moreover, the God of Scripture is a God who not only commands but he also courts us: he wants our hearts, our voluntary obedience.

Christians have not always honored this principle, of

course, often seeking to compel others not only to behave like themselves but also to think like themselves. After all, what greater good can one do for a person than to instill in him truth, for it is truth that gives life – eternal life. Some such notion motivated the Inquisition: it was a rigorous form of evangelism – kill the body to save the soul.

Journalists and analysts in the West have, from the first, tried to tie down 9-11 and similar acts with various ropes braided from a variety of explanations. Some of the explanatory stories are primarily economic: rich West, impoverished South, revolt of the underclass. Some are more political: Palestinian injustice and years of suppression and Western intransigence. Many are psychological: symbols of Western dominance and decadence, outraged Islamic morality and pride. Others are more sociological: exclusion, racism, a threatened, untenable traditional way of life asserting itself against the acid of modernity. Very popular is a cultural one: the clash of civilizations. And let's not forget the ideological one: the rise of Islamofascism.

Each one of these, and there are others, have generated book-length treatments, and are not to be ignored. When human beings – their culture, their politics, their history, their egos – are involved, the stories invariably become very complex. And we do well to honor that and to refuse to oversimplify the story. There are many facets to it, some of which arraign us as well.

I wonder, though, whether 9-11 doesn't inscribe itself so vividly on our minds because it has a theological depth dimension. The Twin Towers resonate with the Tower of Babel, and we are complicit in its construction. When the terrorists turned those towers into a huge signal flare, they, as it were, revealed the face of god – the face of wrath and judgment. This face is not completely alien to Scripture, as we Calvinists know. Although in this case it was fire, we recall that God was once so disgusted by the behavior of humanity that he almost wiped us out with a flood. It is this face of god that the terrorists show us.

And before this kind of god it is entirely fitting that the terrorist is himself immolated, for nothing can stand before that judgment. It is an abyss and a terror to mankind; it consumes all his culture, his history, his ego, for only that which is godlike is worthy of being. This theo-logic is not unique, I think, to Islam or to certain radical brands of Islam. We encounter it in the West as well: an irresistible need to say "I am" by means of self-immolation, sometimes literal, more often spiritual.

Scripture shows this face of god in order to reveal to us the dark depth of the abyss from which we have been rescued by the God who chose to show his face in Jesus Christ. Yet, that terror is inscribed at the heart of our faith as well – in the cross and in the descent into hell. It was revealed to be taken away.

But we are still tempted to call forth that holy, righteous judgment and to turn ourselves into its terrible agents. And again and again we learn that it is a suicidal act: it threatens not only ourselves but the whole of human history and culture with annihilation.

The gods of our own making are not kind: they invariably turn human beings into sacrificial candles to demonstrate the excellence of their (our) judgment. It is right for us to remember and to tremble, and to thank God for showing us another face.

Christian Courier

Founded in 1945

*An independent biweekly that seeks to:
report on significant events in the Christian community
and the world; express opinions infused by Scripture and
rooted in a Reformed perspective;
provide contact for the Christian community.*

EDITORIAL TEAM & PRODUCTION STAFF

Editor: Harry der Nederlanden editor@christiancourier.ca
Circulation: Rose der Nederlanden rose@christiancourier.ca
Accounts/Advertising Manager: Ineke Medcalf-Strayer
ads@christiancourier.ca

The publication of comments, opinions or advertising does not imply agreement or endorsement by *Christian Courier* or the publisher. Please contact circulation if you cannot afford the subscription price but want to receive *Christian Courier*.

Christian Courier

1 Hiscott St, St. Catharines ON L2R 1C7

Tel: (905) 682-8311; 1-800-969-4838

Fax: (905) 682-8313; Web site: www.christiancourier.ca

Publications Mail Registration No. 09375

We acknowledge the assistance of the Government of Canada, through the Publications Assistance Program (PAP), toward our mailing costs.

Canada

Letters

Synod's two-step

I cannot help but wonder about Peter Slofstra's attempt at mathematics. How can he believe Synod's decision to be "two steps forward, one step back?" My calculations tell me the decision was one step forward, i.e. the removal of the word "male" and two steps back, i.e. the reversal of a previous decision for female classical representation and not allowing women on the floor of Synod. Of course, we could add a third step back by acknowledging the absurd recommendation of a seven-year moratorium.

Furthermore, he seems to believe "no threats of leaving and a plea for patience" to be a sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit. How can he extrapolate this conclusion when the CRC women have faithfully and consistently modelled these qualities for decades and yet now find themselves weeping in the gallery?

And yes, of course two women pastors Rev. Thea Leunk and Rev. Mary Hulst made positive comments about the deletion of the word "male" from the church order. So would my wife if she was a CRC pastor. She also would not have written the straightforward letter to the delegates of Synod 2006 since her professional opportunities would depend upon developing "positive" relationships with the CRC's "ruling class."

And, as far as crossing out the "male" reference in the Church Order is concerned, I suggest he temper his glee until Synod 2007 ratifies it with no strings attached allowing "the final step towards women's equality – representation on the Synod floor – to be a natural evolution of justice...." as suggested by my wife in her letter to the delegates. (C.C. July 10, 2006).

Henk Van Hove

Does God micro-manage?

In the latest "Getting Unstuck" column by Arlene Van Hove, she tells the well-known story of Billy Graham's response when he was asked "how he managed to keep his feet on the ground considering the huge success of the crusades." He said (in her words) "that whenever he began to feel too big for his breeches God made sure something would happen that landed him face down in muck and mayhem." I nodded in recognition at Graham's remark, as I (and I'm sure many of you) have experienced that kind of humbling by God many times in my life, and no doubt will again, what with being of intransigent Dutch-German descent! So I was amazed – appalled would actually be more accurate – by Arlene's next phrase: "Now, I don't think God micromanages our lives in this way...."

God isn't there in the minute details of our lives (and in all the workings in his creation)? He doesn't discipline those he loves? He doesn't send us "wake-up calls," large and small, to keep us close to him? He doesn't keep track of the number of hairs on our heads (recounting by the hour)? He doesn't give us our daily bread? We Reformed people confess, based on myriad evidence in Scripture, that God is the sovereign Lord of not only the wider universe but of every square inch of our lives. That doesn't mean that he the Heavenly Father sits back, detached

and curious about what-we-will do, and every once in a while benignly intervenes when we, the kids, get out of hand.

Arlene continued the sentence I quoted by saying: "... But Billy made it quite clear that when we begin to feel smug about our success we will do something stupid that forces us to face our weaknesses." Well, yes, – we – do stupid things, and perchance we learn from them, as God intends. And – we – work for our daily bread. But God has no intimate role in that, and everything else we do? Of course he does, every day.

It is, of course, a great and sometimes unsettling mystery how God's foreknowledge, sovereignty and minute-by-minute governing of our lives meshes with the fact that he has given us the power to make choices and holds us responsible for what we choose. But that he does intimately, concretely direct our affairs even while requiring us to answer for our actions he demonstrates over and over in his revelation of himself in Scripture. This is a doctrine that is anathema to our modern world, whose own operating doctrine is the Sovereignty of Self. I would hope that none of us have come so far as to dismiss the former and buy into the latter.

Marian Van Til
Youngstown, NY

Secularism is not the path to democracy

Ron Gray

In our time, Secularism poses as one of the answers to religious extremism; but that is a philosophical error of categories. Secularism is not non-religious: it is, in fact, one of the religious extremisms that endanger peace and justice in the world. It has been the primary tool that religious extremism has used over the past half-century and more to erode the moral fibre of the democratic West the very core of what President Bush hopes to export to the Middle East.

The differences between religions on the international scene was highlighted recently in an address by a man many academics regard as the greatest moral philosopher of our time: Amartya Sen, Professor of Economics and Philosophy in Harvard's Department of Economics.

Christian schools are perfectly acceptable, he said, but other faith schools, especially Muslim madrassas, should be scrapped if the U.K. Government wants to encourage a unifying British identity.

Commenting on the damage that he believes is being done by Muslim, Hindu and Sikh schools – set up because the Blair government wanted to give them parity with Christian institutions – Professor Sen said: I am actually absolutely appalled.

Born in India into an academic Hindu Bengali family with links to Rabindranath Tagore (the polymath winner of the 1913 Nobel Prize for Literature), Prof. Sen was Master from 1998 to 2003 of Trinity College, Cambridge, where he did his undergraduate degree and PhD. Widely respected as one of the world's top economists, he won the Nobel Prize for Economics in 1998.

Prof. Sen praised Britain's multicultural society, from which he believes all of Europe – notably France and Germany – have much to learn. However, he felt Tony Blair's government (for which he says he voted), made two serious policy blunders: encouraging a society in which ethnic minorities – especially Muslims – are defined almost exclusively by their religion; and endorsing the establishment of non-Christian faith schools.

Prof. Sen, who was addressing the Institute of Public Policy Research, the Asia Society, the Nehru Centre and the Institute of Contemporary Arts, explained to *The Daily Telegraph*: It overlooks the way Christian schools have evolved and often provide a much more tolerant atmosphere than a purely religious school would. A lot of people in the Middle East or India or elsewhere have been educated in Christian schools.

Prof. Sen enlarges on these ideas in his book, *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny*. But the core idea, almost forgotten in today's clamour for multiculturalism, is that all religions are not alike; one religious stream – Judaism and its offspring, Christianity – has been able to elevate moral principles while still recognizing the human worth of those who adhere to other faiths. That's why that stream of faith – and not Secularism – stands at the core of democratic governance

RON GRAY is the National Leader of the Christian Heritage Party.



Christian Courier

Member of Canadian Church Press and Evangelical Press Association

Canada Mail:

PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT NO. 40009999
REGISTRATION NO. 9375
RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO
CHRISTIAN COURIER
1 HISCOTT ST
ST. CATHARINES ON L2R 1C7
email: subscriptions@christiancourier.ca

U.S. Mail:

Christian Courier
(USPS 518-090)
Second-class postage paid at
Lewiston NY
Postmaster: send address changes
to: Christian Courier, Box 110
Lewiston NY 14092

Subscriptions:

Canada (G.S.T. incl.)

USA

Overseas

one yr. (25 issues)

\$40.00

\$37.00 US

\$85.00

two yrs. (50 issues)

\$75.00

\$70.00 US

Advertising deadlines: display and classified advertising: Tuesday, 9 a.m. (13 days before publication date) See classified pages or web site www.christiancourier for more details. (ISSN 1192-3415) Published biweekly on Mondays.

Address all correspondence to: 1 Hiscott St, St. Catharines ON L2R 1C7

Tel: 905-682-8311 or 1-800-969-4838, or fax: 905-682-8313

e-mail: Advertising:ads@christiancourier.ca

Subscriptions: subscriptions@christiancourier.ca

PRINTED IN CANADA



Tradition

Reformed worship, King peppermints, and the smell of decadence

The sermon begins. No sooner has the pastor uttered the words, "Congregation of Jesus Christ..." and up and down the rows purses snap open and hands dig deep into pockets. The faithful are searching for what one person has called "The Reformed cocaine" – peppermints.

In many churches it is part of the permanent liturgy: church members are expected bring along something to suck on during the sermon. What is the origin of this ancient tradition? Church historian Prof. A. Th. Van Deursen doesn't have the faintest idea. "I've been asked that question again and again, but I have searched for the answer in vain."

The practise, however, seems most closely associated with the Calvinist Reformation. Some even discern a perverse continuity with the Catholic mass.

The classical sermon sustenance is, of course, King peppermint. Hard and brittle, one can be snapped into four equal pieces by practised fingers so that a patient connoisseur can make one last as much as ten minutes. Mothers used to portion out three peppermints to every child – one for each point of the sermon. Pity the pastor who preached a four-peppermint sermon.

Once it was a rite of passage: boys knew that when they had mastered the skill of snapping a King peppermint into quarters, they were on their way to manhood – and toward full membership in the CRC. In the days when adults went forward to the table to participate in the Lord's Supper, when the adults popped pieces of dry bread into their mouths, the children sitting in the pews would participate by popping pieces of peppermint into theirs. No doubt this was a secret rebellion against their exclusion.

Signs of decadence

There are, however, signs of decadence. A quick survey of churches reveals that the hard, pure taste of King Peppermints is being supplanted by those soft, pulpy Mentos. And, even worse, some are surrendering to the seduction of Fruitella, Life Savers and other sweet, colorful, cloying substitutes.

What this augurs for the future of Reformed doctrine is still under study, but one thing is sure – it augurs a loss of purity and clarity.



The Reformational movement derived much of its bite and all of its flavor from King peppermints. Without Kings, we'd have remained slaves to insipid liberalism.

One fears that it signals the inroads of pluralism and postmodernism. Especially decadent are those substitutes that last less than two minutes. They indicate a surrender to consumerism, and they put unbearable pressure on the pastor to hurry his sermon. Pastors have been known to break out into a nervous sweat when they see the fourth or fifth roll of candies being passed down the pews, and some begin to tremble and break under the pressure at the sixth pass.

When approached about the loss of market share, a spokesman for King's peppermints stood mute, refusing to affirm or deny that the company is losing its battle to sustain churchgoers and to keep them alert.

Its main competitor, Mentos, was not so shy. The Mentos spokesperson admitted that their product was aimed at the secular market, but she denied the allegation that the increased use of Mentos in church was subverting its hip image. "Why can't churchgoers be hip too?" she asked.

She was asked whether it was true that Mentos tended to be more popular in evangelical and seeker

type churches, but she insisted that Mentos are becoming more popular everywhere.

Inroads of individualism

According to sociologist Jaap Verrekijker, there is a worrisome trend in many congregations. "Increasingly I've noted that parents no longer take a roll of peppermints to church to hand out during the service. Instead, each child brings his or her own bag of candies to church so they can dip into their candy-cache whenever they desire."

This removes the need for children to bother their parents for another candy during the service, but Verrekijker is deeply dismayed by this trend. "A roll of peppermints is a sign of sharing. It reinforces fellowship. Giving each person his own roll or bag is a sure sign of the encroachment of American individualism. You're relieved of any responsibility for your neighbor."

Piet Vandersnuif, a consistory member for 45 years, remarked that in the old days, the atmosphere used to be freshened by the simple, pure fragrance of peppermint. Nowadays your senses are

overwhelmed by a miasma of conflicting odors redolent of the worst features of multiculturalism. Vandersnuif compared the smell unfavorably to that of fermenting silage.

The view from the pulpit

Let's not forget the perspective of the preacher. What does that ritual look like from the pulpit?

"It has never bothered me," says the veteran Rev. Simon den Hartog, who now serves as pulpit supply for a number of different churches. "I do get the impression that rural churches are more loyal to the King than churches in the big cities." (He's referring to King peppermints, of course).

He also wondered whether the switch away from King-peppermints prompted or contributed to the practise of escorting children out of the worship service into the church basement. "King peppermints seemed to have a soothing effect. Those new candies have too much sugar and make the children so hyper that they can't sit still." Further undermining the unity of the family, we may add.

One young pastor was so disconcerted by all the scrambling for candies and the rustling of candy wrappers that he groused about it: "If everyone is finished unwrapping their candies," he blurted, "I'll begin." He has been quarreling with his consistory ever since, not because they suspect him of modernist tendencies, but because they fear he may be a schismatic.

He asked that his name not be used, but when contacted by CC, he shared his belief that King peppermints suck. "They're a secret sign of ethnicity, of belonging to the inner circle – a Dutch Reformed elect. No wonder our evangelism efforts are suffering shipwreck: they are running aground on the shoals of King peppermint!"

"Do you really think that new members don't catch on to the

subliminal message: there's a sort of ethnic communion that goes on during the service. And after the service they are subjected to a withering blast of peppermint-breath."

He'd like to see his classis submit an appeal to the next CRC Synod to ban King peppermints from CRC sanctuaries, or at least to designate King-free Sundays. When CC ran this proposal by Rev. Den Hartog, he sputtered in indignation. He could hardly get his words out. "Where do these new-fangled notions come from?" he cried. "Is this another initiative forced on us by one of those committees in Grand Rapids? Before long we'll be forced to cut our sermons down to ten minutes. I say hand out King peppermints at the door!"

So there you have it, folks: the beginning of the peppermint wars.

Thanks to Rev. Piet Tuit, professor of missiology at Calvin Seminary, for sniffing out this important article. As a missiologist he obviously has a nose for trends that are missed by many intellectualistic theologians. His nose is obviously attuned to the "deep liturgics" of the body. The original, written by Aldwin Geluk, appeared in the Dutch newspaper Nederlands Dagblad. However, in accordance with CRC Synod's ruling that everything that comes from the formerly Reformed Churches in the Netherlands be thoroughly vetted, we have thoroughly revised the original to meet CRC standards.

Disclaimer: Long-time readers of this magazine will suspect that CC is biased in favor of King peppermints because their ads provided a large share of our operating revenues in the early days. We point out that we haven't carried such ads for years. Moreover, sucking a King peppermint clears one's mind of all bias.

News update

It has come to our attention that a number of female (feminists, no doubt) readers are planning to picket the CC office. They demand equal space for Wilhelmina peppermints. CC consulted our peppermint expert in The Netherlands, a former contributor to CC, Rev. Jan Hofland. He informed us that Wilhelmina peppermints, unlike King peppermints, are not made by theologically sound people. Moreover, they tend to fall apart in your mouth. "That's how it is with the wicked!" he adds.

Stewardship

On top of the world, in more ways than one

Recalling a special, end-of-summer milestone

Lisa M. Petsche

Bunk beds – what kid doesn't love them? Sleeping on the bottom is like being in a cozy cave. The real appeal, though, lies with the upper bunk. It's kind of like being in a tree house.

As my son puts it, the top bunk is "your own little space – you can bring people up, or do stuff in peace, with no one to bug you."

Bunk beds are classic cottage furnishings, maximizing sleeping space in traditionally modest-sized rooms. The cottage we've been renting the past few summers contains them, as did our former summer place.

Normally when we were at our cottage, so was my sister-in-law's family. Her two daughters, being the eldest children, had dibs on the upper bunks. (Our daughters were assigned to the bottom bunks and Sean, our youngest, slept on a cot.)

It wasn't only a matter of seniority, though. For safety reasons, my husband and I had set a rule that our kids had to be at least seven years old before they could have the upper berth. They were anxious for their turn to come, hoping an opportunity would present itself sooner rather than later once they'd reached that golden age.

I remember well, and enjoy recalling, the time when our eldest daughter Sarah's big chance finally arrived. It was late summer, and she was a mature seven-and-a-half years old.

Upon learning that just our immediate family would be at the cottage on an upcoming weekend, Sarah had begun to plead for a chance to sleep on the top bunk. After some deliberation, followed by careful establishment of safety rules (the aged bunk bed sets didn't meet current consumer product safety standards), my husband and I had agreed to grant her wish.

The moment we entered the cottage on Saturday morning, Sarah made a beeline for the children's bedroom. Meanwhile, my husband and I unloaded the car and unpacked the various bags and boxes of clothing and food. Our younger daughter briefly disappeared into the bedroom and emerged in her bathing suit, eager to jump in the lake. Usually Sarah would have done the same, but this time she did not appear.

Curious, I finally ventured into the back bedroom. There was Sarah, gloriously perched in the centre of the top bunk, surrounded by cushions, blankets and her favorite stuffed animals and books. (Most of these were imported from home, which explained the bulging duffel bag and backpack she had transported for a two-day trip.)

She had made herself completely at home, even to the point of posting a cherished photo above the bed. Various possessions – including a necklace and purse – hung from the bedposts. Her sun hat, a pendant and a small Canadian flag were draped over the wall-mounted reading lamp. Despite the daylight streaming in the windows, the lamp was on, and Sarah was engrossed in a book. Her beach towel and an inflatable swim ring surrounded her, but she was obviously in no hurry to put them to use.

She didn't come down for almost an hour. Typically by this time she would have been taking running leaps off the dock and frolicking in the water with her siblings or pedal boating around the bay with one of us.

Sarah wasted no time developing and posting a comprehensive list of clubhouse-type rules for guests to the upper bunk. It read as follows: "You must say the secret password before entering, no burping, no crying, no big balls or cars, no wrecking, no crumbs or spilling, no spitting, don't bring too much stuff, (and) you must be five or older." The latter effectively banished her siblings – ages three and four at the time – but she ended up relenting when my husband and I assured her we would closely supervise any visits.

Needless to say, Sarah spent a significant amount of time in her customized nest that weekend.

It was amusing, but also touching, to realize the bunk bed graduation was a major milestone for her, generating great anticipation followed by immense fulfillment.

For that special weekend, our daughter was on top of the world, in more ways than one.



Lisa M. Petsche is a mother of three and a freelance journalist specializing in family life.

Time for learning

Did you have a good vacation? I hope so! Now that school and church programs have restarted or are ready to do so our minds are rested and open to new learning! Right?

What does it take to have a 'learning posture' – an openness to change, to new things, to creativity and to greater understanding? Why learn? Why go through the mental aggravation? Why get excited about discovery?

Reason #1 – it's God given – it's in us by design!

From the account of the tower of Babel, we learn that God deliberately confused the language of mankind to get them to do what he mandated them to do: to subdue the earth. For as it says in Genesis 11:6, 7 "...If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. Come let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other." Our ability to learn, to plan, to understand and make things through our understanding is what sets us apart from the rest of creation. It is designed-in by God.

Reason #2 – Learning helps us learn more about God

The book of Proverbs speaks much about gaining wisdom and how important it is for us to do so. In fact the opening chapters culminate with this statement in chapter 4 verse 7: "Wisdom is supreme; therefore get wisdom. Though it cost all that you have get understanding." And where does one get this wisdom? Again the scriptures are consistently clear: "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding." [Proverbs 9:10].

Reason #3 – Learning is living

Every day is a day of learning. Learning is not just a school thing – it's lifelong. The classrooms change as does the learning – but we are here to grow in knowledge. Whether it's science, industry, psychology, special skills and arts, biological or physical

Reflections on Stewardship

Rick De Graaf

– whatever it is – the more we learn about the created order or of our creator God – we're doing what we were designed to do.

Too often in our time stewardship we brush over those learning moments. Each day offers some new or a better understanding – if we let go and let God show us. It's about having an open posture or sensitivity for learning.

Reason #4 – Learning is for serving

Many of you will know this to be the Redeemer University College motto. Learning multiplies our effectiveness and usefulness by equipping us more and more for greater service in God's kingdom enterprise. We are not to bury our talents but use them, nurture them, stretch, exercise and invest them. Really, God wants to be able to say to us, on that day of reckoning: "...Well done good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!" Matthew 25:21

While I have life and breath may I have an open window (mind) that allows me to see more of you in all I experience, my Creator God!

Stewardly tip: Develop Habits: We don't think much about simple routines – but they can help reduce stress in life. Teaching children to pray before they eat, to brush their teeth before they go to bed, or even the simple habit of switching off lights when leaving a room. A good habit becomes instinctive and doesn't require mental thought. Did I unplug the kettle? Turn off the element? Flush? Put back the toilet seat? If it's an ingrained habit – the worry's off.

Readers: Share your 'Stewardly Tips' so that we all can make better use of the resources God has entrusted to us. Submit your suggestion and your contact information so that we can acknowledge your contribution or ask for more details.

Next issue: Taming Clutter

Rick DeGraaf works for Christian Stewardship Services in Markham, Ontario Rick's email: rickd@csservices.ca



Connecting Donors, Charities, & Ministries 50% of Canadians do not have an up-to-date Will.

Have you ever considered that your WILL is a TESTIMONY of your values and priorities?

CSS can help you develop a WILL that connects your FAITH, FAMILY AND FINANCES for maximum benefit and efficiency.

Please contact our office for a confidential visit
1-800-267-8890; admin@csservices.ca

CHRISTIAN
Stewardship
SERVICES

Suite 214A– 500 Alden Road
Markham, ON L3R 5H5
www.csservices.ca

Church

Extremist attacks against Christians mount in India

Nirmala Carvalho

MUMBAI, India (Compass Direct News) – Multiple attacks and arrests in recent weeks demonstrate ongoing hostility towards Christians in India. Police have co-operated with Hindu extremists, in some cases claiming “tremendous pressure” to charge Christian ministers with forced conversion.

On August 20, extremists burst into a church service in Kolar district, Karnataka state, beating the pastor and his assistant. Prison guards in this state also failed to prevent Hindu extremists entering a prison to beat up a Christian inmate.

In Andhra Pradesh state, police arrested a Catholic priest on August 21 for allegedly burning portraits of Hindu deities and interrogated a pastor after Hindu extremists attacked his church service on August 20.

Pastor beaten

About 10 Hindu extremists from the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) interrupted a Sunday service of the Good Shepherd Community Church in Karnataka on August 20.

Pastor Nelson Jayaraj was about to conclude the service when the mob arrived, according to Albert Lael, organizing secretary of the All India Christian Council.

“When the extremists started beating Jayaraj, his assistant Angam Kainthong tried to rescue him. The culprits then turned on Kainthong and beat him severely,” Lael said.

Before they left, the extremists warned Jayaraj not to hold further services in the area.

“We will file a complaint against the attackers,” Lael said. “We already met with a local legislator, who assured us that such incidents would not happen again.”

About three weeks earlier, 15 Hindu extremists of the Bajrang Dal entered a district jail in the same state and attacked Chetraven Rajan, a Christian businessman accused of compelling his wife to commit suicide. Prison authorities made no attempt to protect Rajan, nor did they file a case against the attackers.

Priest Arrested

In southern Andhra Pradesh state, police arrested Father Mathew Kunnel on August 21 for allegedly burning portraits of Hindu deities.

Members of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP or World Hindu Council), Bajrang Dal and the RSS demanded that the police take action against Fr. Kunnel and other church staff members.

The extremists accused Fr. Kunnel of holding a meeting in which several Hindus became Christians. The priest and his associates allegedly set fire to portraits of Hindu deities on the church premises, the *Deccan Chronicle* reported.

Following these complaints, police registered a case against Fr. Kunnel and other Christian leaders.

Archbishop M. Joji from the state capital,



Hyderabad, said religious tensions were high following the enactment of a bill in August banning the preaching of any religion other than Hinduism in Tirupati, a Hindu pilgrimage site.

“Fr. Mathew is a victim of these heightened communal passions,” Joji told *Compass*.

Police harass pastor

Hindu extremists also attacked a church service run by Pastor Vijay Kumar Mourya of the Gospel Echoing Missionary Services in Andhra Pradesh on August 20. The police later detained and interrogated Mourya.

“I have a small congregation of about 50 devout Christians, who from 1997 have regularly assembled at my house church for Sunday worship,” Mourya explained.

That morning at around 9:30 a.m., a group of 45-50 Bajrang Dal extremists gathered outside the building, chanting “abusive” slogans and Hindu prayers, he said.

Mourya continued preaching until around 11 a.m., when one couple brought a sick 5-year-old boy to the front of the church for prayer.

Enraged by the continuation of the service, some of the extremists entered the hall, grabbed the young boy and twisted his arm while they shouted at the pastor, ordering him to “Stop this now! Leave this place, or the next time there will be bloodshed.”

The mob then vandalized the church, throwing chairs and breaking furniture.

Police summoned Mourya and questioned him for four hours on August 22, and again on August 23.

“The Bajrang Dal apparently told the police that I was involved in conversion,” Mourya said. “One of them – a man I have never met – claimed that I offered him 2,500 rupees (US\$54) to convert to Christianity.”

Police Inspector M. Pachouri from the Mangon police station claimed that local VHP leaders are exerting tremendous pressure on police to register cases of forced conversion against Christians.

Religion part of the problem in peace building, says Jewish leader

Hisashi Yukimoto

Kyoto, Japan (ENI) – Religion can be part of the problem rather than a solution in peace-building, an international Jewish leader has said at the assembly of the World Conference of Religions for Peace in Kyoto.

“Why is it that religious institutions and religious leadership seem to be an obstacle for peace-building rather than a solution?” asked Rabbi David Rosen, international director of inter-religious relations with the American Jewish Committee and the International Jewish Committee.

“Often, because religion relates to our identity so profoundly, when our identity is wounded, when we feel hurt, traumatized, vulnerable, disrespected, we would call upon our religious traditions to give us a sense of stability, meaning, and purpose,” he explained, in his speech on advancing shared security through peace building.

“And very often we do it out of a sense of wound, out of a sense of alienation, out of a sense of humiliation. Then we seek self-justification in a way that demonizes and disregards and stigmatizes the other,” Rosen said in his address to the August 26-29 meeting of the inter-religious body holding its 8th world assembly.

“For this reason, politicians come to the conclusion that if they want to engage in peace building, they need to keep away from religion,” said Rosen, citing the example of the Israel-Palestinian situation. “We must be honest and acknowledge that terrible things are done in the name of religion.”

The rabbi said: “We need to make sure that religion, if it is not to be part of the problem, must be part of the solution. No political process will succeed if it has no support of the religious institutions. And therefore, an inter-religious structure is essential to provide what I might call psycho-spiritual glue, without which no process will hold together.”

Kenneth Hackett, chief executive of the Catholic Relief Services said: “I would suggest that what can be done is to come together and attempt to engage through the media in dialogue, rather than staying away from it.”

Russian Orthodox Church backs US opponents of female bishop

Sophia Kishkovsky

Moscow (ENI) – The Russian Orthodox Church has lauded members of the US Episcopal (Anglican) Church who say they will not recognize the female bishop elected to lead the US denomination, with which the Russian church broke off relations in 2003 over the consecration of an openly-gay bishop.

The election of a woman to lead the denomination was a “crude violation of ancient Church tradition”, the head of the Moscow Patriarchate’s department of external relations, Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, stated in a letter to Bishop Robert Duncan of Pittsburgh.

Following the election in June of Katharine Jefferts Schori to lead the US denomination, Bishop Duncan announced that Pittsburgh and six other dioceses would not recognize her leadership.

“In connection with this I would like to inform you that the Russian Orthodox Church supports your action and expresses readiness to resume relations with your diocese,” Kirill wrote to Duncan in the letter posted on the Web site of the Moscow Patriarchate.

The Moscow Patriarchate of the Russian church cut ties with the Episcopal Church after the 2003 consecration as a bishop of V. Gene Robinson, a divorced father who is openly homosexual and lives in a same-sex relationship.

Bishop Duncan is moderator of the Anglican Communion Network, formed in early 2004 by opponents of Robinson’s consecration.

On August 28, Russia’s Interfax-Religion news service reported on Bishop Duncan’s response.

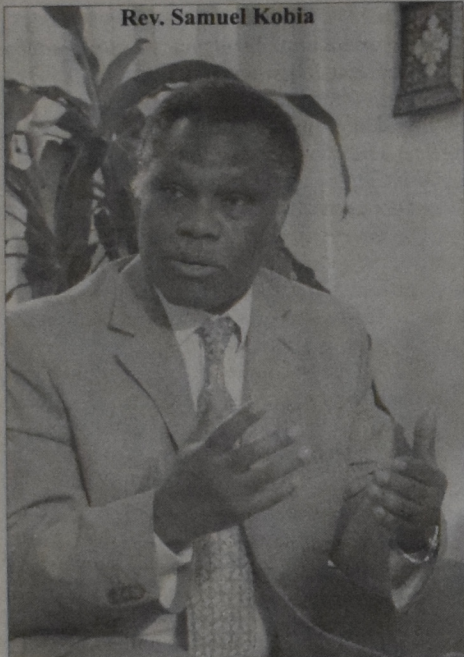
“For the Diocese of Pittsburgh (and the small number of dioceses who continue to stand with us) to achieve the restoration of relationship with the Russian Orthodox Church would be of the greatest significance imaginable,” it quotes from his letter to Metropolitan Kirill.

But Duncan also expressed concern noted that due to his diocese, and some others, allowing for the ordination of women “to the diaconate and presbyterate” (as deacons and priests), the Russian Church might feel compelled to forego a resumption of relations.

Church

World Council of Churches to focus on Middle East at meeting

Rev. Samuel Kobia



Stephen Brown

Geneva (ENI) – The main governing body of the World Council of Churches is to debate the situation in the Middle East at its August 30 - September 6 meeting in Geneva.

"We are convinced in the WCC the time has come when we should broaden the coordination of the ecumenical response to the Middle East," the church grouping's general secretary, the Rev. Samuel Kobia, said after the return this month of a WCC delegation to Lebanon, Israel and the Palestinian territories. The churches' approach to the situation in the Middle East, needed to be "as broad as possible including what we can do with the Roman Catholic Church," Kobia told journalists.

The Catholic Church is not a member of the WCC, which groups more than 340 churches, mostly Anglican, Protestant and Orthodox, but it cooperates with the council on a number of

issues.

The meeting of the WCC governing body, called the central committee, is also scheduled to discuss issues including HIV/AIDS, trade justice following the collapse of the World Trade Organization talks, and the plight of children in conflict situations in Africa, with particular focus on northern Uganda, which has been the scene of a two-decades long civil war.

The gathering at the WCC headquarters in Geneva is to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the 1966 WCC World Conference on Church and Society. That conference focused on the social and technical developments of the time, and anticipated debates on disarmament, racism and a New International Economic Order. For the first time at such a world conference there were an equal number of participants from the northern and southern hemispheres.

The August meeting will be the first under the leadership of Brazilian Lutheran leader the Rev. Walter Altmann, who was elected

central committee moderator following the WCC's assembly in Brazil in February.

In recent years the WCC has faced a decline in income and the Brazil assembly said the Geneva-based church grouping needed to "do less, to do it well." The assembly said the WCC should focus its work on four "areas of engagement": unity, spirituality and mission; ecumenical formation; global justice; and being an ethical voice and prophetic witness to the world.

"Precisely at this time of reduced resources, the large number of challenges makes it difficult to determine priorities, particularly also because needs vary from region to region," Altmann said in an interview published by the WCC prior to the August meeting. "But we need to concentrate resources on what is most essential and on what the WCC can uniquely do to assist the churches."

Religion in public life: Americans yearn for a middle way

Jane Lampman

Concerned about the moral state of their country, many Americans have long said they desire more religious influence in public life. They still feel that way, but they're also growing wary about the forms it is taking. A national survey released by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life on Aug. 24 shows ambivalence about the relationship of religion to politics and social issues, and unhappiness with extreme positions. The public is not polarized into liberal and conservative camps, the poll suggests, but yearns to find middle ground on contentious social issues.

There is distress about both ends of the political spectrum: 49 percent of American adults say conservatives are too assertive about trying to impose their religious values on the nation, yet 69 percent say liberals go too far in trying to keep religion out of schools and government.

"Americans value religion, and attempts to remove it generically from the public square bother a lot of people," says John Green, senior fellow at the Pew Forum, which cosponsored the survey with Pew Research Center on People & the Press, both in Washington, D.C. "But they start getting worried when religion becomes highly politicized," he says. "They don't want it to be too far to one side or the other, or too much in favor of one particular group."

Indeed, the poll shows that relatively few people say they belong to either extreme – the "religious right" or "religious left." Only 11 percent identify with the religious right, a slight drop from the 1990s, Dr. Green says, perhaps reflecting the decline of the Christian Coalition. The right includes about

one-quarter of conservative Republicans and 20 percent of white Evangelicals.

Only 7 percent of Americans identify with the "religious left," yet that is an increase over previous years. Since the 2004 election, considerable foment has arisen within religious circles over the political agenda of the right, with new groups forming to present alternative views on values.

Perhaps surprisingly, the survey found stronger affiliation in these categories among African-Americans and younger adults. Fourteen percent of blacks identify with the religious left; 19 percent say they belong to the religious right. Among adults under 30, 14 percent choose the religious left, while 13 percent choose the right.

According to pollsters, the right remains a more potent political force because members agree on a cohesive list of key political issues, while those on the left hold a variety of views.

Indeed, the survey traces the spiritual roots of the right to white Evangelical Christians (about 24 percent of the US population), which the poll reveals as having views "distinctly different from those held by the rest of the public and even other religious groups."

When asked, for example, which should have more influence on US laws – the will of the American people or the Bible – 60 percent of white Evangelicals chose the Bible. Other Protestant, Catholic, and secular groups voted the opposite way by huge majorities.

Similarly, strong majorities of white Evangelicals believe God gave Israel to the Jewish people and that the state of Israel is the fulfillment of biblical prophecy,

views not shared by majorities of the rest of the public. While 62 percent of white Evangelicals say the Bible is the actual word of God and is to be taken literally, only 24 percent of Catholics, and 17 percent of mainline Protestants share that view (35 percent of the public as a whole).

Pollsters found that 32 percent of the public identify themselves as "progressive Christian," and they tend to be more moderate than left-of-center on political issues.

Regarding the foment in religious circles, says Green, "some of it is liberal, but much of it may be moderate – people who take their faith seriously and believe it ought to impact their politics, but don't want to be with [the Christian conservatives]." Green directs the Bliss Institute for Applied Politics at the University of Akron, in Ohio.

Neither political party can take comfort from the poll: The Democrats still face a "God problem," while the Republicans are losing some appeal among their own base. Only 26 percent of Americans see the Democratic party as "friendly" toward religion (down from 29 percent last year), though 42 percent call it "neutral." Republicans face a more surprising decline, with 47 percent seeing them as "friendly" to religion (down from 55 percent). Yet they dropped 14 percentage points among Evangelicals. "Going into the fall campaign, a lot of religious voters are up for grabs," Green says.

Social and political issues are getting plenty of attention in houses of worship. Those who attend religious services at least monthly say their clergy are speaking out about hunger and poverty (92 percent), abortion (59 percent), Iraq (53 percent),

and laws regarding homosexuality (52 percent). Other topics discussed from the pulpit include the environment, evolution and intelligent design, the death penalty, stem-cell research, and immigration.

When it comes to being active in politics, a bare majority (51 percent) of Americans supports the idea of houses of worship expressing their views, while 46 percent say they should stay out of politics.

Religious groups have been vocal on science-related issues such as stem-cell research and evolution. The survey shows that a majority of white Evangelicals (65 percent) reject evolution, while majorities of other groups accept it. Catholics and mainline Protestants who accept evolution are divided over whether it occurred through natural selection or was guided by a supreme being.

On the controversial issue of global warming, 79 percent of Americans now say solid evidence exists for it, with 50 percent saying it is due to human activity. Twenty-three percent say it's due to natural patterns. Sixty-one percent call for immediate government action, and 57 percent say stricter laws are worth the cost to the economy.

On questions of homosexuality, 56 percent oppose gay marriage, but 54 percent favor civil unions. Thirty percent back a constitutional ban on gay marriages.

While abortion continues to split the country, a large majority of Americans now express a desire to find "a middle ground."

The telephone interviews with a nationwide sample of 2,003 adults were conducted in July.

Jane Lampman is a writer for The Christian Science Monitor.

Trends

Reflections on trends in the Christian Reformed Church

Harry Antonides

Following is a slightly edited version of a letter I sent earlier this year to the council of the Willowdale Christian Reformed Church. I believe that this topic warrants a wider distribution, and I welcome any responses these thoughts may occasion. It concerns an issue that I am sure is also close to the hearts of other members of the CRC and readers of this publication.

Where is the CRC going?

In conclusion, many among the CRC are too quick in giving up on the Reformed tradition with its rich resources, seeking instead new inspiration from other sources.... My concern is that the CRC not become just another mainline American church community with fundamentalist leanings. (Gordon Spykman, *Pro Rege*, September, 1986)

I am not saying anything new by stating that the CRC as a denomination is changing quite drastically. I hasten to say that not all changes are bad. In fact, some are necessary and beneficial as part of the maturing of the Christian Church through history. There is nothing static about the living Church. For example, we need to shed rules and habits of the past that were more culture-driven than inspired by the dynamics of the Bible.

But some things never change, such as the basic teachings of the Bible about God's majesty, human nature, the norms for social institutions, and the meaning of creation, fall, and redemption, summarized in the command to love God above all and our neighbor as ourselves.

The strength of the Reformed tradition is its emphasis on the biblical teachings of the covenant and the all-inclusive nature of the Kingdom of God. A worldview based on such a foundation is rich in its potential to affect culture in a redemptive way, as articulated in the contemporary confession *Our World Belongs to God*.

We have a wealth of outstanding literature available within that worldview, which enables us to engage our culture in ways that a more individualistic view of the Christian faith lacks.

Losing ground

However, I believe it is exactly on this score of our rich Reformational heritage that we are losing ground. This is especially significant since we are living in a culture that is largely hostile to the Christian faith. One outcome is that we are becoming more diverse in life style and conviction about all manner of things. I think it is no exaggeration to say that these changes are beclouding our understanding of what it means to be church, and in our case to be a Reformed church.

There has been quite a lot of commentary by people who have reached the same conclusion. Let me refer to the views of Dr. James Schaap, author of the highly readable

Maranatha CRC, Edmonton, Alberta



story of the CRC, *Our Family Album*. His treatment of the church is respectful and appreciative, and therefore beyond suspicion. Yet he, too, is concerned about what he describes as a loss of vision and appreciation of the Reformed heritage in our denomination.

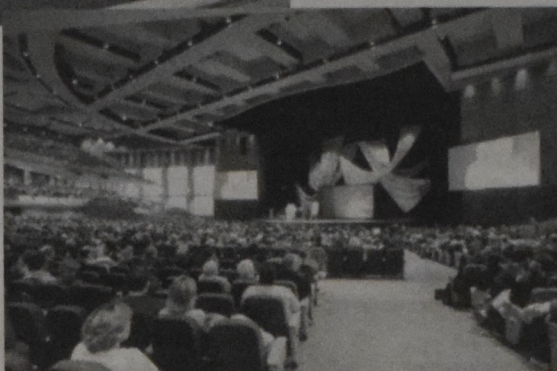
Schaap worries about a trend that will sharpen the differences between three discernable streams within our denomination, which he refers to as progressive, evangelical, and conservative. He fears more than anything else "that we've lost something important that once defined us." He thinks that our traditional defining center is more than ethnic, and was in fact Calvinistic, the worldview that was later refined by Abraham Kuyper. Schaap writes: "Today that defining center, I believe, is almost gone within fellowships that carry the name CRC." He continues: "If what holds us together is simply a personal commitment to Jesus Christ our Savior, then – it seems to me – there is no further need for a denomination called Christian Reformed. Let me say that again. If what identifies us as a denomination is essentially "no creed but Christ," then I believe we're all better off if individually we throw in our lot with other already existing fellowships and work ecumenically to heal the historic wounds of separation and schism. Let the progressives become mainline Presbyterians, let the upwardly minded folks go Southern Baptist or Assembly of God. And the conservatives? Well, many of them have already voted with their feet. (pp. 399-400)

I believe that Dr. Schaap is right in saying that the theological tradition that has held us together is fading under the stress of competing interpretations of our identity and calling. But what he then poses as a counter move to this decline is also relevant to all members of this denomination, when he writes:

If we are to continue as a denominational fellowship, what we will have to muster is some kind of common theological bond. What our leaders will have to

work at, what our pulpits will have to preach, what our colleges will have to pledge their allegiance to, what our people will have to believe is something that indeed still sets us apart from other fellowships. (p.403)

Schaap says that we stand to lose something distinctive and precious if we lose what we refer to as



Willow Creek Community Church interior with huge screens

"being Reformed." Then he makes a very important point that we tend to overlook: "That loss – and this cannot be emphasized enough – is not simply ours; for that Reformed, Calvinistic voice will be missed by the North American evangelical Christian subculture, as well as North American culture itself."

My purpose for extensively quoting Dr. Schaap's description of the CRC is that in my view the problems (and challenges) we face in local congregations should not be seen in isolation but as part of a larger denominational trend. This of course does not make the job of local congregations any easier. Yet, I hope that in our denomination we still have resources and insights (and I believe we do) that can assist us in our efforts to be a church that seeks to be true to our confession – and our name.

Putting first things first

Our problem is not a lack of alternative possibilities and resources – even right within our own Reformed community. But the question is whether we can muster the will and the consensus to explore and discuss them openly. Allow me to mention a few more authors who in my view ought to be listened to.

We are well served by the works of the late Calvin Theological Seminary professor Gordon Spykman, quoted at the beginning of this article. Professor Spykman spent a lifetime teaching and writing as an apologist of biblical religion, and he has much to teach us about being a faithful church. The article in which the above quotation appeared is entitled "Fundamentalism in the CRC: A Critique," and was published in

Pro Rege, September 1986. His major work, *Reformational Theology: A New Paradigm for doing Dogmatics*, is a readable and powerful formulation of biblical religion.

The work of Dr. John Bolt who currently teaches Systematic Theology at Calving Theological Seminary also deserves our attention. His article "Why It's Important to Stay Reformed," *The Banner*, February 5, 1996, deals exactly with the topic of this article, and is therefore very relevant.

Thirty-six years ago, the late Dr. Bernard Zylstra, a former president of the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto, addressed the elders of classes Hamilton and Toronto about the very same issues confronting us today. His analysis and advice at that time are still profoundly relevant, because his counsel was based on solid scriptural insight as well as a keen understanding of the spiritual and moral condition of the modern world. I believe that the state of our church and the world has not improved in the meantime.

Let me just quote a few brief excerpts of this address to give a sense of the thrust and the relevance of Zylstra's counsel to a previous generation of leaders in the CRC:

In the local congregations the consistories will have to ask themselves whether they are executing their responsibilities so that the Word of our Lord is preached, heard and done. Consistory meetings will have to become a bit more business-like: the business of the Lord will have to be discussed.... The congregations will have to be included in this dialogue – after all, we do maintain the office of all believers. The second service might well begin to play a role in this.... The young people will want to be heard, as well as those who have received a measure of wisdom from a close listening to the Word. The agenda of classical and synodical meetings will have to be adjusted to a new set of priorities: what are we here for? And those who govern and supervise the overall denominational enterprises ... will have to put first things first: the recovery of the Kingdom-vision.

We have to discover anew Who our Master is, who we are, what it means to live the Good Life in the Kingdom, and in terms of that what the task of the New Humanity is in the history of mankind between Christ's first and second coming. And everything else will have to be relativized: our traditions, our confessions, our dated theologies and philosophies, our 'old' moralities, our church-walls.

Zylstra's final sentence is a prayer that is fitting for all ages. Hence I conclude, as he did:

... Revive us again, O Lord, "So that, as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in the newness of life." (Rom. 6:4)

hantonides@sympatico.ca

Poetry



Ironing after Midnight

Your mother called it
 "doing the pressing,"
 and you know now
 how right she was.
 There is something urgent here.
 Not even the hiss
 under each button
 or the yellow business
 ground in at the neck
 can make one instant of
 this work seem unimportant.
 You've been taught
 to turn the pocket corners
 and pick out the dark lint
 that collects there.
 You're tempted to leave it,
 but the old lessons
 go deeper than habits.
 Everyone else is asleep.
 The odor of sweat rises
 when you do under the armpits,
 the owner's particular smell
 you can never quite wash out.
 You'll stay up.
 You'll have your way,
 the final stroke
 and sharpness
 down the long sleeves,
 a truly permanent edge.

Marsha Truman Cooper

Preserving the Heritage

Grandfather cleared this land,
 built walls from stones that surface
 every year, a never-ending crop
 in this New England soil.

Father sowed broad fields of corn
 that stood in ranks like
 soldiers on parade with upraised
 sword blades rustling in the wind.

Now Cambodians raise strange fruit
 and water spinach where our
 peach trees grew, smile at me and speak
 an unknown tongue. The land endures

Mary Lou Healy

Church

"My eyes and heart will always be there."

II Chron. 7:16

Imagine the heart of God,
 the most loving entity in all creation,
 being there at church.

Never mind the short comings
 of the rest of us - but see instead
 the tender Father love
 watching compassionately
 watching as we respond to his giant gesture
 of outstretched arms on the cross;
 loving us that much

Linda Siebenga

Homesick

Geraniums knew my grandfather
 by heart. These red ones tell
 the gifts of his attention:

the way he colored the dull
 Midwestern summers of my childhood

the way he let me pinch off pansies
 so buds could unfurl their faces

the way he thumped watermelons
 to find one pungent and crisp

the way his lips struggled against a smile
 whenever he held the Old Maid

the way he lingered by our piano,
 fingers laced against his vest,
 and let my halting Strauss
 waltz him home.

Joan Thiel Blessing

Cuba

Hitchhiking around Cuba

Danna Harman

TRINIDAD, CUBA — In perhaps a moment of lapsed judgment, I recently decided to travel around Cuba the way most Cubans do — by thumb. And so, on a cloying Caribbean day, I found myself standing under palm trees on a road outside Trinidad with an off-duty policeman and his family. We were waiting for passing cars to stop. We were hitchhiking. These days, wherever you travel, someone — usually your mother — will warn you that hitchhiking is not advisable. But in Cuba it's a way of life. "Here, your car is your brother's car," Araceli, a grandmother in Trinidad, explained to me. "That's the essence of Cuba."

But, the spirit of socialism aside, picking up hitchhikers is also required in Cuba. And, as far as I could tell, it would be hard for anyone to get anywhere if it weren't.

The first thing you need to know about Cuban transportation is there isn't much of it. According to a 1997 World Bank study, only 32 cars exist for every 1,000 people — about the same ratio as in 1958, a year before the revolution. The US, by comparison, has 808 per 1,000.

To buy a new car, you need state permission. This is granted exclusively to senior state workers, certain medical professionals, and VIPs. Regular Cubans are restricted to owning vehicles already in the country, mostly American classics from the pre-1970s — cars with big grilles, big fins, and big gas bills. Few spare parts exist because of the US embargo.

Public transportation is scarce and overcrowded. People line up for hours to get on buses or "camels," 18-wheelers transformed into lumbering transport vehicles. Taxis belong to the state and are too expensive for all but tourists. While some private car owners can get permission to run taxi collectives, these are as unreliable as the vintage cars themselves. There is always biking and walking. But, I was told, hitchhiking was a top bet.

Outside Trinidad, it became clear that life on the road involved a lot of waiting by the side of it. An hour after arriving, I was still standing there with the off-duty policeman and co. By then, we had been joined by a family going to the beach, a dozen people heading to work, an elderly man on crutches, a young couple on a date, and a church group. And, of course, an "amarillo."

As might be expected, hitchhiking in a land of rules is no free-wheeling affair. State officials, known as amarillos for their yellow uniforms, are stationed along the country's highways to oversee the process. Their job — for which they earn a respectable 400 pesos (\$15) a month — is to make lists of riders

ing to scribble down plate numbers.

Finally, I decided to give up and take a collective taxi going to Sancti Spiritus. The price, announced the driver's assistant, was 5 pesos (18 cents), to be collected by assistant No. 2. Half the people at the hitchhiking stop paid up and piled into the '56 Chevrolet.

"Not to worry," the policeman assured me as I waved goodbye. His free ride would eventually come. "The system is slow," he said. "But it works."

Fernando, the Chevy's driver, was really a rowing instructor who

at the question and slowing down for the second police inspection in half an hour.

On Day 2, I didn't hitchhike either. I wanted to. But it was not to be. I was told the Sancti Spiritus-Caibarién road, where I was going, was a bus route, which meant no amarillos, few hitchhikers, and even fewer people moved by the spirit of socialism. There was only one other problem — the bus was only for Cubans. I could have taken the tourist bus — at nine times the price — but it had just left, according to station master Fidelito. But not to worry: Fidelito's friend, Juan, who runs a small unofficial transport business, was going to help.

Soon enough, Juan and I were road-tripping along in his rebuilt Russian Lada. He would be fined if caught with a foreigner, so he asked me to pretend I was a mute cousin. Later, we made a detour to see a monument to Camilo Cienfuegos, a hero of the revolution, in Yaguajay. It was impressive, but we had to whiz by to avoid police. I stared out the window at coconut trees and billboards. "Life is worth living," read one. "Plant ideas and they will grow," suggested another.

I was getting discouraged with hitchhiking, when, on Day 3, it all came together. As I stood outside Remedios, an amarillo finally stopped a state vehicle, a minivan filled with workers returning from a "fun day" at the beach. I jumped in. We then pulled over for the driver to buy some avocados. We stopped later for onions for the driver's assistant. We picked up a family going to

see cousins. No one talked to me, but it felt great. I was hitchhiking.

I got dropped off in Santa Clara, where I went to the Che Guevara museum. And then, still humming the catchy revolutionary tunes piped in over the speakers there, I got another ride. And another — all the way back to Havana. My fortunes had turned.

There was Pablo with his horse and buggy, who wedged my laptop bag between his legs and the horse's backside for "safekeeping." Caesar and Diego from the national water department, who told me about their time as soldiers in Angola. And Luis Alfonso, a cancer specialist, who took me for tea at his great aunt's home. By the time I rolled into Havana the next evening, chatting baseball with my new friend Jamie from the Finance Ministry, I was a bona fide hitchhiker — living the Cuban experience.

I was also ready to hail a tourist cab.

Danna Harman is a correspondent for The Christian Science Monitor.



55-year-old taxi



Street in Trinidad, Cuba

and flag down passing cars.

Not all cars are required to stop. Those with yellow, caramel, and white plates indicate state vehicles and must pull over. Brown plates (military) and blue (private) should stop but don't have to.

Little is expected of green (tourists) or black (diplomats) plates because, as Araceli explained, "they think differently about their responsibilities to the community."

The system is not without problems. Theoretically, drivers in state cars who don't stop can be fined. But a suspiciously high number passed by, making a "turning in a moment" sign with their hand. Others just ignored their community responsibility altogether — leaving the amarillos vainly try-

ing to scribble down plate numbers. **Finally, I decided to give up** and take a collective taxi going to Sancti Spiritus. The price, announced the driver's assistant, was 5 pesos (18 cents), to be collected by assistant No. 2. Half the people at the hitchhiking stop paid up and piled into the '56 Chevrolet.

Such permission, of course, comes with regulations. He can, for example, only make one run on his two-hour route a day. "Why?" I ask. "That's just the rule," he said, bemused

Christian education

They must be angels!

Gloria Stronks

"Ah! Look how tall they are! See how they laugh? They must be angels!"

We were in the market in Santo Domingo, a large city in the Dominican Republic. The speaker, a woman who had her own stall in the market, and I were watching two tall Dutch-Canadian brothers bargaining with another shop owner.

"They are looking at jewelry for women. Who do you think they are buying it for?" asked another woman.

"Perhaps for their wives back in Canada," was my reply.

"Ah, lucky wives!"

And all the women standing around smiled their agreement.

The group of men shopping in the market that day, all from Ontario, were part of Worldwide Christian Schools' HANDS (Help Another Nation Develop Schools) Program. They had traveled to the DR to repair roofs and build additions to schools that are part of COCREF, an organization of 21 Christian schools for 4500 children in the poorest regions of the country. Not only had the men paid for the expenses of their trip and their housing, they also provided the building materials needed for their work. The truth is that I hardly recognized the men because when I had met them at their work they were so covered with the dust that clung to their perspiring faces.

Worldwide Christian Schools (WCS) is an organization that promotes and provides Christian education in over 45 countries, always in poverty-stricken areas. The Canadian office of WCS (www.wwcs.org) is located in Burlington, Ontario where Hank de Jong is the Executive Director. While Mr. de Jong is responsible for the overall leadership of the organization, Rev. John Postuma (jpostuma@wwcs.org) holds the position of Director of Ministry Development. In this role, Pastor John Postuma's primary purpose is to raise the mission awareness of local churches to carry out the Great Commission. WCS also has two offices in the United States, one in Grand Rapids, Michigan and one in Columbia, South Carolina. WCS has also recently opened an office in Bangalore, India.

WCS-Canada has experienced tremendous

growth over the past number of years. Last year alone WCS-Canada sent out 24 HANDS teams consisting of 286 participants.

Coordinating the HANDS teams in the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua are Paul and Leslie Bartels and Nathan and Kim Boersema respectively. The Bartels have been with WCS since June 2004 and the Boersemas since September 2005.

Why Christian schools? Because Christian education is education that helps children understand that God is the Creator of every single aspect of our world and therefore is in every single subject that they study. Many of the children who attend schools supported by WCS have parents who are not Christians but who want good education for their children. At other times these are the only schools available to the families.

WCS often partners with other Christian agencies at work in these regions. For example in South Africa, Director Samson Makhado of the Association for Christian Schools International (ACSI) works with the WCS field director to help form regional Christian school associations throughout the continent. In St. Petersburg, Russia, WCS provides support for CRC missionary Gary Timmerman to help teachers in the Christian schools form an association that will be mutually supportive.

In addition to the construction work of the HANDS Teams, WCS also provides conferences and other instructional sessions so that the teachers in these schools understand what it is to teach from a biblical perspective. As often as possible Worldwide Christian Schools works with university faculty and school leaders in each region to identify lead teachers. These lead teachers attend conferences and other events arranged by their own university faculty and our specialists and then work to help other teachers develop the same understandings and abilities. Surprisingly, many Christian teachers who teach in state schools also attend these sessions.

Here are the names of just a few of the Canadians who help with these and other projects:

- John Hull of the King's University College in Edmonton is helping to provide this perspective for teachers in St. Petersburg, Russia.

- Jim Vreugdenhill, formerly of the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools, spends weeks at a time providing instruction for school leaders in Nairobi and elsewhere in Africa, including at Daystar University.

- Lee Hollaar taught a biblical worldview course in Kiev, Ukraine, for teachers from a number of the new Christian schools of the former USSR.

Volunteer work day at Chatham-Kent Covenant Home Project

- Benna Nicolai serves in Belize, helping teachers write curriculum with a Christian perspective.

- Peter Van Huizen assisted school administrators in Venda, South Africa, to define the role of administration, board and committees, as well as planning professional development for teachers.

- Marc and Dora Strooboscher helped teachers in Theocentric Christian School in South Africa.

WCS-India has a steering committee made up of local educators who work to provide the necessary instruction and materials for teachers. School leaders in Central America and the Caribbean also work hard to provide this kind of support for teachers. With the help of WCS a total of 1,072 teachers were provided with continuing education during 2004-2005. At least 35,000 children are being educated in Christian schools that are helped by WCS.

Many teachers have never experienced any schooling other than rote learning, with large groups of students parroting what the teacher says. In some regions the teachers have such a limited knowledge of the Bible that a gift of a children's Bible storybook is very helpful to them. Often the children have no Bibles in their homes.

Can we help? There are many ways teachers, parents, grandparents, children, and all who are concerned about God's children throughout the world can help with these projects. For more information about each of the following programs visit WCS-Canada's website at www.wwcs.org or telephone 905.333.4430 or 866.360.4274.

- **HANDS Teams** – Travel to Latin America, Asia or Africa to construct or expand classrooms and school buildings. All that is needed are willing hearts and hands. You will get a personal look at a country in transition and catch the excitement of the transforming nature of Christian education as it paves the way to a more meaningful future for children and their families. For more information on the HANDS Program please contact the WCS-Canada office at canada@wwcs.org

- **Sponsor a school** – The School Sponsorship Program provides operational funds and prayer support for schools around the world. This program makes it possible for children to receive a high quality, Christ-



centered, community transforming education where typically no other educational options exist. A total of \$34 per month (\$400/year) will help a Christian school in an especially needy area to pay for operational costs and offer tuition to those who can't afford it. Imagine what would happen if each North American Christian school or family sponsored one needy school in another part of the world. To join the School Sponsorship Program, please contact Michele Ludwig at sponsor@wwcs.org.

- **My Own Bible** – For only \$5.00 a child in Africa can not only receive a Bible but also will be trained by The Bible League in reading and understanding that Bible. Imagine what would happen if one class of children in every North American Christian school collected funds for this purpose! To participate in this project please contact the office at canada@wwcs.org

- **Share the Joy** is an interactive unit teachers can use to get their students excited about Worldwide Christian Schools and its work in the Dominican Republic. To make this+ unit hit home for your students, the best way to begin is by making the decision to help sponsor a Christian School in the Dominican Republic as a class or as a school. You can use Share the Joy in your class-room before or as you raise funds to support your sponsored school! Share the Joy includes:

- Classroom lessons with activities designed for multi-level elementary students

Continued on page 14...



Ecclesiastes

The bizarre blows of fate

I have seen something else under the sun: The race is not to the swift or the battle to the strong, nor does food come to the wise or wealth to the brilliant or favor to the learned; but time and chance happen to them all.

Ecclesiastes 9:11

A. A. van Ruler

These words taken in context signal a new tack in the theme of the futility of all things at which human beings labor under the sun. Things often turn out very different than we expect. We have certain expectations – for which we have good reasons. Who is going to win the race? The swiftest, of course. Who will win the battle? Why, the strongest. Who will be successful and become wealthy? Surely, the brilliant. And who will attract followers and favor? Won't it be the intelligent and learned?

This is just the way things are; it is in the very nature of things. We are tempted to say that it is true almost by definition: the race goes to the swift because that's what makes them the swiftest. In reality, however, by no means do things always work out this way. Sure, this is how things go most of the time. Life isn't altogether irrational and unpredictable. But neither does it always go according to expectation.

Something unexpected can happen any time, and the outcome

is far different than we had expected on the grounds of the given. Time and chance happen to them all, and then all our reasonable expectations suddenly look empty.

This brings home the fact that we do not have things in our own hands and that they don't depend on our decisions. We often think they do.

This is especially true of the can-do types among us who like to take charge. Such people often display an impressive capacity to get things done. They also awaken great expectations in the rest, and they are often quite aware of their own power. Given their talents, they have developed a high level of confidence that they can indeed achieve their goals.

This is quite reasonable on their part, but it is also a great temptation. It gives rise to the idea that we

have control of our own destiny.

Then all of a sudden something pokes a stick into the spokes of our wheel. The Preacher stresses the suddenness. We don't expect it. We don't see it coming. It hasn't figured in our calculations at all. Like a fish that swims unawares into the net, he is being hauled up into the boat before he realizes it. One minute he's swimming free, the next he's caught.

That's how it is with people as well, says the Preacher. They're

traveling along unawares when suddenly destiny strikes. They are totally shocked at the evil that overcomes them.

Everything turns out very differently than they expected. They fail to reach the goal they had taken for granted. No matter how strong or how brilliant they are, their talents are canceled out by the blind, dumb forces that overcome them.

When that happens, it looks as if life simply has not come to its proper destination. They are frustrated. They are disappointed at a very fundamental level. The entire content of their lives is nullified. This infects our entire culture with a sense of futility.

These are facts of experience. This is how things happen – perhaps not always, but often enough. And it causes the Preacher to pause and to reflect. He asks: How are we to understand and to comprehend such happenings? One hardly even knows how to refer to or name such events. What is this that overcomes us so suddenly, so catastrophically?

The Preacher can find no better way to refer to them than "time and chance."

It's a striking combination. It is easy to see the connection between chance and time – that specific moment in which a person is overcome or struck down. We can't help looking for a mysterious connection between chance and time. But before we know it we are thinking in fatalistic terms. Perhaps this or that had to happen at precisely that moment. Perhaps it was written in the stars and planets.

These are very feeble attempts by mankind to come to terms with

the factuality of such an experience. Is there something to it? Is there something about this twinning of time and chance? Is there some validity to the notion that this moment was inevitable – that it simply had to happen then and there? And is there also something to the notion that what happened at that moment was something that was destined to happen?

We must beware that we not get trapped in such ways of thinking. Let's remind ourselves that these are all nothing but words, descriptions, notions and speculations. The only things that is certain are the

often bizarre facts of our experience. These are what we are trying to digest. And we can't avoid putting names on them. We pretend to interpret them in some way.

But we must be careful with the theories and the world-views that shape these words. The Preacher gives them the names "time and chance." But do these signal a fatalistic system? It makes better sense to understand "time and chance" as forms by which God rules all things.

They may be shadowy forms. We find it hard to see how these can be forms of God's rule. We may even enter into argument with God about them. This seems to be the best and the most pious way of dealing with the bizarre facts of human experience.

Cast them before God's feet! Complain about their irrationality to him. Tell him aloud that you don't understand how the Lord God can act so strangely, so darkly. Appeal the decision. Take God to court before God. This is still pious because in this way we continue to fully hold onto God while taking the facts of experience seriously.

The New Testament follows this same path. In fact, it is even dimmer than Ecclesiastes in this regard. It acknowledges the utter frustration of our life-expectations. It acknowledges the cross. And it is here that the argument with God takes place, including the complaint that we have been forsaken by God. Yet, in spite of everything, in everything and over everything, the trust and praise continues; in fact, it proclaims the victory over the powers and fate.



Remember February, 1953? Seen here is Burgsluis, Zeeland, after the flood. The Westenhavendijk gave way in the night and the town was suddenly under water.

They must be angels!

(grades 2-8).

- **Devotional ideas and suggested songs** to fit each devotional theme.

- **A songwriting contest** with a chance to win a prize from WCS.

- **Lunch Money Fund** – There are children in India for whom the only meal of the day is the lunch that is served to them in school. For only 30 cents a day a child can have that one very important meal. Think how wonderful it would be if grandparents would suggest, "When it is your birthday you will get a birthday present, as always. However, we will also send enough money for 100 children to have a meal at school because it is your birthday. To participate in this program contact the office at canada@wwcs.org.

- **Teach in Vietnam or in China** – Teachers who would like to take a year or two leave of absence from their present positions, as well as retired teachers, are invited to apply to teach English at an English School in Vietnam or at Knowledge Tree School in China. If you are accepted for one of these

... continued from p.13

positions there will be an orientation to help you understand the work and the life. Your travel and housing will be paid along with a stipend. Contact Hank de Jong at hdejong@wwcs.org for more information.

- **Office volunteers** are needed to help keep office costs at a minimum. Most are general tasks that just require willing hands. WCS welcomes the help of high school students who need volunteer hours. Contact Michele Ludwig by email at mludwig@wwcs.org or telephone 905.333.4430 or 866.360.4274

- **Mission Homes and Covenant Homes** – Proceeds from the sale of each home help develop Christian schools around the world. Non-profit organizations, such as schools and churches, join with WCS by using a volunteer committee to coordinate the construction of each home. If the proceeds from the sale of the home are split between WCS and another non-profit organization, it is a Covenant Home. If the proceeds are used exclusively for a WCS project, it is a Mission

Home. Many Christian schools around the world have benefited from this simple and highly successful program. Contact the office at canada@wwcs.org or telephone at 905.333.4430 or 866.360.4274 for more information.

- **Make a donation** – Your contribution will make a difference. It may seem simple, but a little will go a long way. If you would like additional information or a presentation regarding the work of Worldwide Christian Schools, please contact the WCS-Canada office at canada@wwcs.org or 866.360.4274

The woman in the Dominican Republic market went back to her own booth and I thought about what she had said. No, the people who help children all over the world are not angels. Instead, they are serving as the hands of our Living God.

Gloria Goris Stronks, professor of education (emeritus) at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, is Director of Continuing Education for Teachers for Worldwide Christian Schools. serves the teachers of Asia.

Ethics

Stem cell report falls short of its hype, bioethicists say

Tom Strode

WASHINGTON (BP) — Pro-life bioethicists say Advanced Cell Technology's highly publicized technique for extracting embryonic stem cells without harming a human embryo not only is unethical but wasn't actually accomplished by the research team in its study.

ACT, a biotech firm in Worcester, Mass., reported Aug. 23 its scientists had "successfully generated human embryonic stem cells (hES cells) using an approach that does not harm embryos." The news media reported the study as a significant breakthrough that might end the controversy over the cells that supposedly have great potential for treating debilitating diseases but so far have required the destruction of a human embryo in order to extract them.

Pro-life bioethicists said the method of taking one cell from an eight-cell embryo to develop a stem cell line still does not resolve the moral problems. They pointed out the method would destroy the single cell, which, at that stage, is "totipotent," meaning it could develop into an embryo. They also said it is uncertain what the long-term effect would be on a remaining embryo who has lost part of his genetic material.

Bioethicists Wesley Smith and Richard Doerflinger, however, said the technique was not just unethical. They said the ACT team did not successfully use the method, a fact noted in its report in the journal *Nature* but not made clear in publicity releases and news reports.

"Researchers did not safely remove single cells from early embryos but destroyed 16 embryos in a desperate effort to obtain an average of six cells from each one," said Doerflinger of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in a written statement. "The experiment left no embryos alive and solves no ethical problems."

"Their study shows nothing about the safety of removing only one cell, which in fact is something they never did — partly because their own earlier experiment in mice indicated that 'co-culturing' several cells together might be needed to develop a cell line."

Smith, a senior fellow with the Discovery Institute and a lawyer, said in a commentary for



The Weekly Standard magazine, "ACT and the media — in their desire to boost popular support for embryonic stem cell research — simply took a leap of faith and portrayed an experiment showing that something might be possible as if the feat had already been accomplished."

"This is not to say, of course, that deriving embryonic stem cell lines from a procedure that allows the embryo to survive is impossible — only that it hasn't been done."

The report in *Nature* showed ACT's team took four to seven cells from each of the 16 embryos, Smith said.

On Aug. 25, *Nature* corrected a news release it had issued on the ACT study and provided clarifying information it had requested from the researchers, *The Washington Post* reported.

Stem cells are the body's master cells that can develop into other cells and tissues. The remarkable ability of stem cells has given hope for the development of cures for a variety of diseases and other ailments. Embryonic stem cells are considered "pluripotent," meaning they can develop into all of the different cell types in the body. Non-embryonic stem cells (often called "adult stem cells") are regarded as "multipotent," meaning they can form many, though not all, of the body's cell types.

Unlike research using embryos, extracting stem cells from non-embryonic sources — such as umbilical cord blood, placentas, fat and bone marrow — does not harm the donor and has produced treatments for at least 72 ailments, according to Do No Harm, a coalition promoting ethics in research. These include spinal cord injuries, rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, multiple sclerosis

and sickle cell anemia.

Embryonic research has yet to treat any diseases in human beings and has been plagued by the development of tumors in lab animals.

Stem cell poll

Opposition to federal funding of embryonic stem cell research has increased slightly in the last two years, according to a new survey commissioned by *Newsweek* magazine.

The poll, announced Aug. 26, showed 40 percent of adult Americans oppose federal grants for such research, which results in the destruction of human embryos. In an October 2004 survey, 36 percent of registered voters opposed funding the research.

Support for federal grants for embryonic stem cell research fell from 50 percent in 2004 to 48 percent.

The main reason for opposing federal funds for such research changed during nearly two years. In 2004, 37 percent said it was not a "good use of public money," while 58 percent objected on moral or religious grounds. In the latest *Newsweek* poll, 49 percent said it was not a proper use of government funds, while 46 percent had moral or religious objections.

Stem cell research that destroys embryos is legal in the United States but is not funded by the federal government. In July, President Bush vetoed a bill that would have weakened his policy barring federal grants for experiments that result in the destruction of embryos. The legislation would have underwritten research that uses embryos stored at in vitro fertilization clinics. Bush's rule allows funds for research only on embryonic stem cell lines already in existence when his policy was

My window seat

Mendelt Hoekstra



Making a difference

It should be no surprise to find out that I have a five-figure salary, which means I earn between 10,000 and 99,999 dollars per year. I feel this is a fair wage considering my education, experience and the line of work I am in. I would assume that most Canadians with similar ages and schooling fall within the same income category. At times I crave to be smarter, more educated and make more money — but then recite the 10th commandment and am reminded to be content with the circumstances that I'm blessed with.

One of my closest friends who has more education than I and by all accounts is more intelligent than I in most areas of life does not even have a four-figure salary. That means that he doesn't even earn a salary of one thousand dollars per year. With his education, knowledge and ability to work hard, by modest calculations, he could quite easily find a job that pays in the higher five-figure salary range. Instead, he helps spread the word of God in Haiti with a non-government organization. He is making a difference. He is doing what Jesus told Peter to do in John 21; "Feed my sheep."

How does one learn that mission should take precedent over money?

We know that September is upon us as we are all reminded by the tireless bombardment of back-to-school advertisements. Soon teachers and parents are bound to hear that age old question: "Why do I have to learn this stuff?"

I can remember a grade nine student coming to me at the beginning of the year in the Instrumental Music course that I taught. He honestly and respectfully stated that when he leaves high school he is going to be a farmer so why should he have to learn the baritone?

When those questions come our way, the 'Get good grades for a good job to make lots of money' is a popular answer. The alternative answer could be 'Educate yourself because the world, which belongs to God, could really use another person that is less popular but in all accounts more important.' The idea of gaining knowledge for something other than a better job is a nice one.

There is a truck commercial currently on the radio that boasts hundreds of purchase options on their advertised vehicle. The deep voiced announcer begins the advertisement by asking why this company would offer so many choices. Throughout the commercial the music swells and near the end of it, the climax of the commercial tells us the reason; "Because choice is not an option, it's a right."

This world constantly tells us that newer is better and the fact is, better is usually outdated before you know it. All one needs to do is look at how today's technology becomes tomorrow's outdated version.

When one supports another person, it is where help happens with a face and a name. It is where Jesus happens with a name and a face. Most people aspire to do something great with their lives. In all the aspirations we have to do something, to build something, to be a part of something, the greatest accomplishment is to be someone. This is where people who work for others differentiate themselves from those who work with others.

Mendelt D. Hoekstra is the founder and director of the Music Therapy program at Bethesda, an organization owned and operated by the Mennonite Brethren Conference of Ontario, that supports adults with developmental possibilities. He lives in Vineland, ON with Marisa and their three children

announced in 2001.

The federal government provides funds for non-embryonic stem cell research, which does not harm donors.

The latest *Newsweek* poll, which included 1,002 respondents, was conducted Aug. 24 and 25 by Princeton Survey Research Associates International.

Society

What if there are no adults?

Albert Mohler

The transition to adulthood used to be one of the main goals of the young. Adulthood was seen to be a status worth achieving and was understood to be a set of responsibilities worth fulfilling. At least, that's the way it used to be. Now, an entire generation seems to be finding itself locked in the grip of eternal youth, unwilling or unable to grow up.

Concern about this phenomenon has been building for some time. Baby-boomer parents are perplexed when their adult-age children move back home, fail to find a job, and appear to be in no hurry to marry. Though the current generation of young adults includes some spectacular exceptions who have quickly moved into the fullness of adult responsibility, the generation as a whole seems to be waiting for something—but who knows what?—to happen.

Frederica Mathewes-Green sees the same phenomenon. In a brilliant essay published in the magazine *First Things*, Mathewes-Green describes this new reality with striking clarity.

She begins with the movies. Describing herself as a fan of the old black-and-white classics from the 1930s and 1940s, Mathewes-Green remembers how young actors customarily played the part of mature adults. Actresses like Claudette Colbert and Jean Harlowe were “poised and elegant” onscreen. She notes, “Today even people much older don't have that kind of presence.” She then compares Cary Grant with Hugh Grant. The first Grant was “poised and debonair” while the more recent Grant “portrayed a boyish, floppy-haired ditherer till he was forty.” She cites reviewer Michael Atkinson, who dubbed today's immature male actors as “toddler-men.” As Atkinson describes the distinction, “The conscious contrast between baby-faced, teen-voiced toddler-men movie actors and the Golden Age's grownups is unavoidable.”

As Mathewes-Green explains, “Characters in these older movies appear to be an age nobody ever gets to be today. This isn't an observation about the actors themselves (who may have behaved in very juvenile ways privately); rather, it is about the way audiences expected grownups to act.” Fast-forwarding to today's Hollywood culture, she observes: “Nobody has

that old-style confident authority anymore. We've forgotten how to act like grownups.”

Frederica Mathewes-Green is surely correct in seeing this contrast. Gladly, she not only depicts the reality as we now face it—she goes on to explain how we have arrived at such a state of institutionalized immaturity.

As she sees it, “The Baby Boomers fought adulthood every step of the way.” In other words, Mathewes-Green points to the parents of this current generation of young adults as the locus of the problem. Speaking of her own generation, she remembers: “We turned blue jeans and T-shirts into the generational uniform. We stopped remembering the names of world political leaders and started remembering the names of movie stars' ex-boyfriends. We stopped participating in fraternal service organizations and started playing video games. We Boomers identified so strongly with being ‘the younger generation’ that now, paunchy and gray, we're bewildered. We have no idea how to be the older generation. We'll just have to go on being a cranky, creaky appendix to the younger one.”

Mathewes-Green's analysis pushes back even further than the baby boomers. She blames the parents of the baby boomers for trying to protect that generation from the realities of a cruel world and a hard life. Having fought and survived the great trial of World War II, they wanted to protect their own young children. “They wanted their little ones never to experience the things they had,” Mathewes-Green explains, “never to see such awful sights. Above all, they wanted to protect their children's innocence.”

Mathewes-Green is a writer of great ability. Her picturesque imagery makes her point with poetic force. She describes the days “when large families lived together in very small houses” and when “paralyzed or senile family members were cared for at home.” When the realities of life were not hidden away, institutionalized, and sanitized, children grew up understanding that life itself is a trial and that adulthood requires a willingness to grow up, take responsibility, fend for oneself, and fight for one's own.

In summary, Mathewes-Green



believes that the parents of the 1950s “confused vulnerability with moral innocence. They failed to understand that children who were always encouraged to be childish would jump at the chance and turn childishness into a lifelong project. These parents were unprepared to respond when their children acquired the bodies of young adults and behaved with selfishness, defiance, and hedonism.”

In her historical analysis, the parents of the baby boomers attempted to separate childhood and adulthood into two completely separate compartments of life. Childhood would be marked by innocence and adulthood by responsibility. As Mathewes-Green warns: “Be careful what you wish for.” Missing from this picture is a period of urgent transition that would turn the child into an adult. What we face now is a generation of children in the bodies of adults.

Understanding the reality of the problem is a first step towards recovery. Nevertheless, mere description is insufficient as an answer to this crisis.

In days gone by, children learned how to be adults by living, working, and playing at the parents' side. The onset of age twelve or thirteen meant that time was running out on childhood. Traditional ceremonies like the Jewish Bar Mitzvah announced that adulthood was dawning. This point would be clearly understood by the young boy undergoing the Bar Mitzvah. “By the time his body was fully formed, he would be expected to do a full day's work. He could expect to enter the ranks of full-fledged grownups soon after and marry in his late teens. Child-

hood was a swift passageway to adulthood, and adulthood was a much-desired state of authority and respect.”

Today's patterns of schooling do not, in the main, appear to produce a similar result. Instead, the educational process continues to coddle, reassure, and affirm young people without regard to their assumption of adult responsibilities. This approach, Mathewes-Green explains, prepares children “for a life that doesn't exist.”

When a generation is continuously told that its options are limitless, its abilities are boundless, and its happiness is central, why should we be surprised that reality comes as such a difficult concept?

Mathewes-Green points to the delay of marriage as the most interesting indicator of what is happening. As she notes, the average first marriage now unites a bride age 25 with a groom age 27. “I'm intrigued by how patently unnatural that is,” Mathewes-Green observes. “God designed our bodies to desire to mate much earlier, and through most of history cultures have accommodated that desire by enabling people to wed by their late teens or early twenties. People would postpone marriage until their late twenties only in cases of economic disaster or famine—times when people had to save up in order to marry.”

Is the current generation of young adults too immature to marry? Mathewes-Green insists that if this is the case, it is only because the older generation has been telling them they are too immature to marry. Does early marriage lead to disaster? Mathewes-Green is ready to prescribe a dose of reality. “Fifty years ago, when

the average bride was twenty, the divorce rate was half what it is now, because the culture encouraged and sustained marriage.”

Look carefully at how she describes the personal impact produced by this pattern of delayed marriage: “During those lingering years of unmarried adulthood, young people may not be getting married, but they're still falling in love. They fall in love, and break up, and undergo

terrible pain, but find that with time they get over it. This is true even if they remain chaste. By the time these young people marry, they may have had many opportunities to learn how to walk away from a promise. They've been training for divorce.”

Rarely does one article contain so much common sense, moral wisdom, and promise. The way to recovery surely must start with a rediscovery of what adulthood means and a reaffirmation of why it is so important—both for the society and for individuals. Adulthood must be tied to actual, meaningful, and mature responsibilities—most importantly, marriage.

There is reason for hope. Many in this new generation demonstrate a willingness to buck the trend. They are the new pioneers of adulthood, and they will be uniquely qualified to influence their own peers and to reshape our own culture. Taking marriage seriously as a life-long commitment, they will be more inclined to raise children who will understand what it will take to live as adults in our time of confusion. They will understand that eternal youth is not a blessing, but a curse.

Dr. R. Albert Mohler, Jr., serves as president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary—the flagship school of the Southern Baptist Convention and one of the largest seminaries in the world. He has been recognized by such influential publications as Time and Christianity Today as a leader among American evangelicals. In fact, Time.com called him the “reigning intellectual of the evangelical movement in the U.S.”

Character

Practising self denial

Richard Oostra

I must fall and die like a kernel of wheat that falls into the furrows of the earth. Unless I die I will be alone – a single seed. But my death will produce much new wheat kernels – a plentiful harvest of new lives. If you love your life down here – you will lose it. If you despise your life down here – you will exchange it for eternal glory.

– John 12:24, 25 LB

We live in an age of spiritual delusion. (2 Thess. 2:11) What is implied in most churches today is that we are acceptable to God without dealing with seeking of self by the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. We love that old wooden cross and we worship the Man who died on that cross to make us acceptable to God. But it was this same man, Jesus, who said: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." (Luke 9:23)

Carrying your cross

It is so easy for us as believers to picture Jesus on that cross but can you see your old nature, as it were, being nailed to that cross? It is here where we must learn to give up living for "self" and making Christ the focal point of our daily life.

Even the apostle Paul, who was so mightily used by God could say, "I die every day." (1 Cor. 15:31) It was his ambition to make Christ known, to be a fool for Christ, to give up his high religious position and to become a witness for Christ, even to the point of death.

The age of delusion

Yes, we live in an age of seeking self and the question is "how far have we gone along?" Have the TV evangelist and the New Age concepts influenced us by claiming that we can have Jesus and everything else as well? Do earthly riches, while others are in need, not bother us? Do we feel that a life at par to this world is quite acceptable to God? Have we become spectators of the gospel instead of eager participants? Do we know what time it is on God's time clock?

"The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan be displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and every sort of each that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to

love the truth..." (2 Thes. 2:9,16)

Not being conformed

For a committed believer the power is found in a crucified life. (Gal. 2:20) True Christians will have learned to die to self daily so that when the time comes to give their lives and possessions they will not look for comfort or shelter but will rejoice in suffering.

Yes, the message of the cross spells bad news for the flesh because we always wanted Jesus for what we could get from him. The message of the cross however is an unnatural message that goes right against our flesh and our sinful self-seeking nature.

"The sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want." (Gal. 5:17)

Our attitude should become as Christ's, who even though he was rich, became poor, so that others may find salvation through his sacrifice. He lived a life of servitude; he humbled himself and was obedient to his Father even to the point of death (Read Phil. 2:5-11).

Salvation with evidences

A person may claim conversion, but if the Christ-life is not clearly presented and "self" with its old nature not dealt with, it will appear even in a religious disguise.

"And since your old sin-loving nature died with Christ, we know that you will share his new life. So look upon your old sinful nature as dead and unresponsive to sin and instead be alive to God, alert to him through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. 6:8,11 LB)

We cannot overcome "self" by self-will but only by the Spirit of God. But we must therefore give ourselves to prayer for inner strength to live the obedient life of self-denial and surrender of the flesh. No heart is totally pure until it has been enthroned with Christ. No cause – even in the name of Christ – will result in any good unless we dethrone ourselves and no longer seek our own glory.

"Those who let themselves be controlled by their lower nature live only to please themselves, but those who follow after the Holy Spirit find themselves doing the things that please God."

"So, dear brothers, you have no obligation whatever to your

Continued on page 18...

The art of resilience

How do people deal with difficult events that impact their lives deeply? For example, how do they process the death of a dearly loved family member or the loss of challenging and satisfying job? Or come to terms with some other traumatic unexpected event in their lives such as the hurricane that devastated New Orleans a year ago or the 9/11 terrorist attack? What helps people get through such difficult periods in their lives?

The first concrete answer is, of course, our faith in God. God is in control of our lives, watches over us, and provides us with everything we need. God is steadfast and does not let us go. The Holy Spirit is our ever-present help in times of trouble. Yet, how does our faith become practical in the face of painful events that drastically change our lives?

The concept of *resilience* comes to mind here. Resilience is our ability to thrive and grow to full potential as persons despite traumatic life situations that come our way. Resilient people learn to experience obstacles in life as opportunities for personal growth. In due time we learn to become, humanly speaking, better people in the process of navigating the thunderbolts and lightning that can cross our path, right out of the blue.

We all are destined to suffer from time to time, in one way or another. Life is fragile and imperfect. We get sick, people die, and disappointing events happen. It is a fact of life, and a result of sin. The sooner we are able to accept the reality that life is suffering, says Scott Peck the author of *The Road Less Traveled*, the happier we will be. It allows us to reserve our energies for enjoying life, and living it to the fullest.

Resilience is a dynamic inner quality. We are all resilient people to some extent because of the mere fact that we are alive and moving forward. The real power of resilience, however, comes out of the woodwork during hard times. It comes to its fullest expression when excruciating pain threatens to overtake us. It comes to our rescue along with, or surrounded by the power of the Holy Spirit, and with the help of God.

As individuals we are born with varying predispositions towards resilience. Some of us may be blessed with a larger dose of it than others. Resilient people tackle problems head-on and find a way to move through trials one step at a time. Their parents may have been good role models and passed the gift of resilience on to their children. Some people simply inherit sturdy genes, enabling them to be ward off challenging events with a straight-forward hardiness. A good example of hardy and resilient people, are people who chose to emigrate to another country. Resilience would be a quality they had to have to be able to pack up large families and move them, households and all, to distant foreign lands. I am proud to be born of immigrant parents and consciously claim a measure of resilience, simply by having inherited their genes.

Resilience is fortunately not a quality that is only come by in our gene pool, however. It is an ability we can all acquire. It is possible to teach ourselves to be flexible in the face of life's challenges. In fact, it is precisely these difficult times that teach

us something about the power of resilience. Our inner voices call us to action in unprecedented ways when life is hard, enabling us to sort out the issues and move through them. It is in hard times that we discover strength and courage we never knew we had.

What, then, are characteristics of resilient people? They are people who have the ability to bounce back and recover from unexpected life events. They do this in due time, slowly, allowing their lives to move in new directions. They are able to find meaning in life which incorporates their sorrow. They are people who believe that closed doors lead to open windows. Resilient people tend to have a healthy social support system and a deep-rooted faith. They are flexible and find new ways to adapt to the ebb and flow of life. They are comfortable in and can adapt to a variety of situations. They grow from their experiences, good and bad, and become more fully aware of who they are meant to be. Resilient people have many interests, they are always in motion, and enjoy discovering new things. They embrace the good, and instinctively move away from the bad.

At the same time, resilience is not about power or success. It is an inner quality that sustains people when trouble threatens to crush them.

This does not mean that people who suffer darkness and despair are not resilient. Losses in life need to be grieved. The greater the loss, the longer it takes to grieve it. We grieve very individually, and need to take our own time to do that. Resilience gives us the ability to do claim inner strength to do what it is we need to do. It sends us searching deep within our souls to tap gifts waiting to be released that force us to move forward on a new road, in hope and freedom.

Not long ago I talked with a friend struggling with a painful situation in her life. She told me she wanted to focus on Psalm 82 for a while because she needed to get in touch with her deepest self. Psalm 82 is not a very encouraging psalm and thinking of her dwelling on it, worried me. About a year later she announced she was ready to move on to Psalm 83. That was a relief for me. It had been a long year.

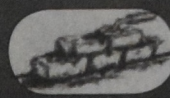
But this wasn't about me. My task had to be to accompany her on her journey, in whatever form that took. My friend showed her ability to be resilient by allowing herself the time to do what she needed to do to work through a calamity in her life. It enabled her to experience the depth of her sadness, allowing her when the time was right, to move forward in new directions. Resilience is the complex quality of character that allows us to ride out the storms in life in our own unique and personal ways and to grow through them.

The discussion on the role of women in the Christian Reformed Church has taken on a new urgency. I hope that our church can be resilient. I hope it can spend a year in reflection, and emerge strong enough to ride the wave towards full inclusion.

Vicky Van Andel is the editor of this column. Anyone who would like to contribute to this column is invited to contact her via e-mail at: vickyv@telus.net

BuildingTrust

Vicky Van Andel Ed.



Religion

God is winning

Religion refuses to fade away in the modern world

NEW YORK (Zenit.org) – Far from fading away in the shadow of modernity and prosperity, religious fervor is, in fact, growing. This is the argument of an article, "Why God is Winning," published in the July-August issue of the magazine *Foreign Policy*.

The authors, Timothy Samuel Shah and Monica Duffy Toft, explain that one of the most recent confirmations of their thesis was the win last January of the Hamas party in the Palestinian elections.

After the election, one supporter of Hamas replaced the flag flying over the parliament with a banner proclaiming Mohammad. Soon afterwards the violent protests in many countries over the publication of cartoons depicting Mohammed provided further evidence of the strength of Islamic fervor.

This was not just an isolated incidence, Shah and Toft maintain. "Voices claiming transcendent authority are filling public spaces and winning key political contests," they say.

Religiously-inspired politics has played an important role in situations such as the fight against apartheid in South Africa and the victory of Hindu nationalists in India in 1998.

In the United States, evangelicals have played an increasingly

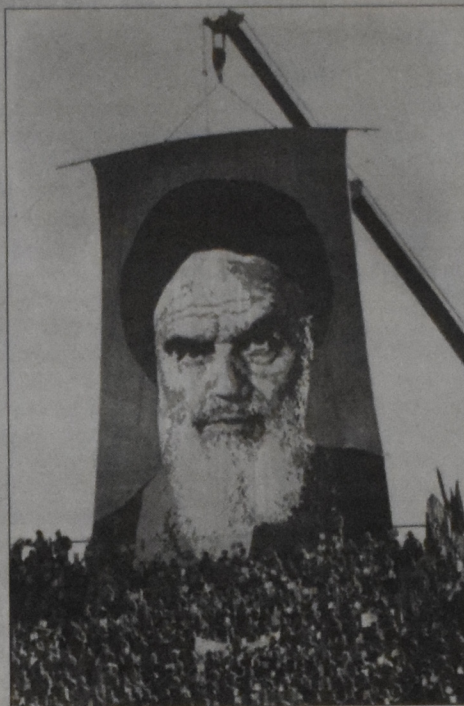
important part in elections in recent years. "Democracy is giving the world's peoples their voice, and they want to talk about God," the article notes.

The strengthening of religion is taking place at a time when democracy and freedom has spread in the world. The opening up of political processes in countries such as India, Nigeria, Turkey, and Indonesia during the past decade led to a much greater influence by religion in political life.

A similar trend has taken place with regard to economic life. Even though poverty is still a serious problem in many countries a lot of people are now better off in economic terms. But as the world's population has become wealthier and more educated they have not turned their backs on God. A case in point is the rapid economic development in China, accompanied by a strong growth in religious belief.

Citing data from the World Christian Encyclopedia, the *Foreign Policy* article points out that the two largest Christian faiths – Catholicism and Protestantism – and the two largest non-Christian religions – Islam and Hinduism – have increased their share of the world's population in the year 2000 compared to a century earlier.

The four religions together ac-



Huge image of Ayatollah Khomeini being raised in Iran after the revolution

counted for 50 percent of the global population at the start of the 20th century. This had risen to nearly 64 percent by the beginning of the 21st century, and it could rise to nearly 70 percent by 2025.

Neo-orthodoxy

But the religious upsurge is not evenly distributed, point out Shah and Toft. "Today's religious upsurge is less a return of religious orthodoxy than an explosion of 'neo-orthodoxies,'" they argue.

These groups have in common the ability for good organization and political savvy. They are also quick to utilize new technologies to reach potential believers and translate their numbers into political power. This has been the case with Hindu groups in India, the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, Hamas in the Palestinian territories and the Pentecostals in Brazil.

There are concerns, however, that such groups may be too extreme in their views and that they can also provoke civil conflicts. But even if there are negative aspects to some uses of religious fervor, religion has played a positive role in supporting democracy and human rights in many countries.

Shah and Taft further explained their case in an interview posted on the Web site of the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life. In the text, dated July 18, they note that attention has been focused in recent years on Islam. It is not just

an Islamic question, however, and the Islamic question needs to be understood in a broader context of religion in the world.

They also admitted that a number of Western countries, among them European nations, Canada and Japan, are quite secular. Even so, religious debates and groups still play a role in these countries. In Europe, for example, many recent debates on issues such as Turkey's entry to the European Union or immigration, involve Islam and the role of religion in European identity.

In trying to account for the current strength of religion, Shah and Taft opine that a change began in the late 1960s and accelerated in the 1970s and 1980s. In the developing world, the secular leaders and ideologies that promised progress began to fail. This was the case, for instance, in both Egypt and Iran.

The subsequent defeat of Soviet communism accelerated this process, creating a vacuum that religious groups were able to fill. In addition, a number of "prophetic" religious leaders, from John Paul II to Islamic figures, have exercised a large degree of authority and influence over their followers in recent times. The mobilization of religious believers in the United States has also been an important factor in influencing political and social life, with consequences both inside and outside America.

Until recently, however, religion's role in politics was given little weight by analysts. That has changed now and both academic circles and governments are taking religion more seriously.

Global resurgence

Another view of religion in the modern world comes from Ronald Inglehart, chairman of the World Values Survey, and a professor at the University of Michigan. A transcript of an interview with Inglehart at the National Press Club, dated May 8, is also available on

the Pew Web site. The most recent values survey, the fifth, is now being carried out, with results to be published next year.

Inglehart underlined the complexity of the situation regarding religion. In many countries religion is declining. But, he continued, "there are more people alive today with traditional religious beliefs than ever before in history, and they're a larger percentage of the world's population than they were 20 years ago."

There was secularization involved with economic changes, although the United States does provide an exception to this process. But the secularization took place mainly in the period of industrialization, and is still going on in some countries. This led to a decline in religion in many countries and the weakening of established religious organizations. In many Western nations, for example, church attendance is down.

The situation has changed, however, in the post-industrial or knowledge-based societies. In these countries there is an increasing debate over issues related to religious values, for example, over the question of same-sex marriage.

So while traditional churches may still face many challenges, there is a greater interest among the population for spiritual questions. Questions of culture and religion, therefore, do have greater weight in today's world.

Inglehart also pointed out that there is a notable difference between the economically advanced countries and the developing nations. The new interest in religion in developed countries is different in that it is less accepting of authority and linked to what is termed new age beliefs. In the developing countries, however, there is significantly more emphasis on traditional religion and this has not changed in recent years. In fact, they are not secularizing and are placing more emphasis on traditional religion.

This divergency in religious attitudes is a possible source of conflict, Inglehart noted. This conflict is not inevitable, but is a potential fault line where it could occur. So globalization has not brought with it greater conformity and convergence in terms of cultural and religious values. A situation that will no doubt be closely studied in coming years.

Self denial...continued from p. 17

old sinful nature to do what it begs you to do. For if you keep on following it you are lost and will perish, but if through the power of the Holy Spirit you crush it and its evil deeds, you shall live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God." (Romans 8: 5, 12-14 LB)

Cost of discipleship

In most churches today we have preached 'Jesus crucified' but have neglected the self crucified life he wants us to live. It is Jesus who wants to rule over us so that we can be dynamic and effective ambassadors for his kingdom. We live in an age of materialism and we, as well as our churches, can easily become kingdoms unto ourselves. We in our lifestyle and in our churches have accumulated wealth by storing up riches on earth but this is not what Jesus intended us to do.

"Anyone who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of me...."

"Anyone who does not take up his cross and follow Me is not worthy of me."

"...whoever loses his life for my sake will find it." (Matt. 10: 37-39)

"Whoever cannot give up everything he has cannot be my disciple." (Luke 14:33)

Question:

Do your daily activities, actions and thoughts reflect someone living selfishly or that as a true follower of Christ? Do you know what time it is on God's time clock? Let's be ready so that it also will be said of us "...they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death," (Rev. 12:11) but that we all will be valuable to serve his cause on earth. "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself up for me." (Gal. 2:20)

Business Directory



REDEEMER

University College

Put your investment to work for a wonderful Kingdom cause!

Competitive Rates - 4.70% to 5.00%*

5 Year Term

Interest paid semi-annually

For Information Call: 1-877-779-0913 ext. 4205

*Other rates apply for RRSP/RIF plans

777 Garner Road East
Ancaster, ON L9K 1J4
www.redeemer.ca

Tel: 905-648-2131
Fax: 905-648-2134
stewardship@redeemer.ca

The **Kloet-Schuringa** team
Serving your real estate needs in Mississauga and Oakville.



George Kloet
Sales Representative
gkloet@trebnet.com

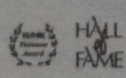


Pauline Schuringa
Sales Representative
pschuringa@trebnet.com



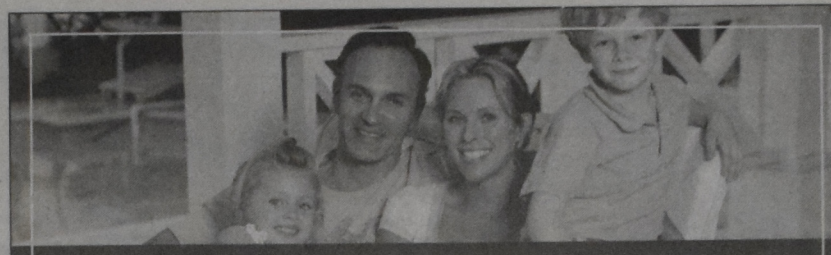
Michelle Kloet
Sales Representative
michelle.kloet@gmail.com

Working together to serve you best.
Call us to experience the difference great service makes.



905-855-2200 **RE/MAX**
www.thekloet-schuringateam.com

1697 Lakeshore Road West, Mississauga, Ontario L5J 1J4



Are You Paying Too Much?

Reviewing your life insurance?

Check out these 10 year renewable term life insurance monthly rates:

Age	Male		Female	
	\$250,000	\$500,000	\$250,000	\$500,000
30	\$15.42	\$23.40	\$12.32	\$16.98
35	\$16.16	\$25.18	\$14.00	\$20.30
40	\$19.35	\$32.47	\$17.55	\$24.95
45	\$27.97	\$44.10	\$19.80	\$32.85
50	\$37.35	\$65.48	\$26.55	\$44.87
55	\$58.50	\$108.00	\$40.95	\$74.08
60	\$90.00	\$164.85	\$63.00	\$111.26

The above rates are preferred non-smoker rates



Tyler van Middelkoop
CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER



P.V.&V. Financial Centre
905 632 6192
1 866 694 7276
tylerm@pvv-insurance.com

Trust Our Experience

BUSINESS AND SERVICE DIRECTORY

R. HAALBOOM, Q.C.

Barrister Solicitor Notary

Richard Rijk Haalboom, Q.C., B.A., J.D.

7 Duke St. West Ph: 519-579-2920
Suite 304 Fax: 519-576-0471
Kitchener, Ontario N2H 6N7
E-mail: richard@haalboom.ca

BAKKER

BARRISTER & SOLICITOR

570 Welland Avenue
St. Catharines ON L2M 5V6
905-688-9352

Albert J Bakker



MERRITT FUNERAL HOME

287 Station St.
Smithville, ON L0R 2A0
Serving Families for 4 Generations
Director: **Thomas C Merritt**
Fax 905-957-1371 Ph: **905-957-7031**
Website: www.merritt-fh.com **FSAC**

MEESTER INSURANCE

Smithville, Ont.

Phone:
905-957-2333
or

1-800-465-8256
www.meesterinsurance.com



JERRY'S AUTO BODY

(Beamsville) Inc.

Serving Beamsville and area since 1969

- Complete Collision Repairs
- Quality Refinishing

Jerry Gerritsen 5529 Regional Rd. #81
Alan Gerritsen Beamsville ON L0R 1B3
Phone/Fax: **905-563-7702**



Winter Bookkeeping & Tax Service

4184 Mountain St.
P.O. Box 844
Beamsville, ON L0R 1B0
Ph: **905-563-4471**
Fax: **905-563-4696**
Email: **wbts@sympatico.ca**



ARIE HOOGERBRUGGE

Associate Broker

RE/MAX
DelMarRealty Inc.
840 Queenston Rd.
Stoney Creek,
ON L8G 4A8

Ph: **905-662-5300** Fax: 905-664-2300

GLENDAL MOTORS

407 Wilson St. Ancaster
Just west of Mohawk on Hwy. #2
We supply propane



Rob Brouwer
Doug Kloet

905-648-4113

Adrian Kloet (owner)



Digital Art & Graphics Inc.

578 Upper James St.
Hamilton, ON L9C 2Y6

For all your printing needs

Call Brian or Kathie Bezemer at:
1-800-247-0155 or **905-574-0822**

Email: **bezemer@digitalartandgraphics.com**

RESERVED FOR YOUR BUSINESS!!

Only \$25.00. Run your ad monthly or perhaps every issue.
Check out our website:
www.christiancourier.ca
for issue dates and deadlines.
Call us at **905-682-8311** or
email: **ads@christiancourier.ca**

Classifieds

Birthdays



Congratulations on your
90th Birthday, September 18th

Egbert Renkema

With love from your children,
grandchildren and
great-grandchildren.

Psalm 32:7

*You are my hiding place:
you will protect me from trouble
and surround me with songs of
deliverance.*

Address: Apt 403-600 Chieftan St
Woodstock ON N4T 1S1



80th Birthday on Sept. 16, 2006

Sharon Zwart

Happy Birthday to our Mom and Beppe!
We are thankful for the years of health and
happiness you have enjoyed and shared with us.

Family and friends are invited to celebrate with Mom
on Saturday, Sept. 16 at an **Open House** at
Ingersoll Christian Reformed Church from 2-4 p.m.
Best wishes only, please.

With love, your nine children, their spouses
and 21 grandchildren!

Home address: 402 Wonham St S
Ingersoll ON N5C 3V2

Anniversaries



Oudega (W) Friesland 1956

Port Rowan 2006

We the children and grandchildren of

AREND AND FEMMIGJE HOEKSTRA (nee Abma)

would like to give thanks to God for the **50th Anniversary**
of their Heit and Mom and Pake and Beppe.

Jelke & Serena (Atwood) and children Arend & Liberty, Kelowna, BC
Tena & Neil (Opthof) and children Adrian & Annalise, Calgary, AB
Betty and son Joshua, Guelph, ON

Oscar and children Ashley & Jake, Bowen Island, BC
Gail & Jeff (Krell) and son Oscar, Guelph, ON

Please join us in celebrating this occasion.

Open House on September 30th, 2006 from 2-4 p.m.
At the Fellowship Hall, 12 Church St. Port Rowan, Ontario

Home address is 11 Front Rd, Port Rowan ON N0E 1M0
Home phone: (519) 586-7082

Thank You

We were deeply moved by the many
congratulatory and well-wishing mes-
sages received on the occasion of our
60th wedding anniversary.

They added greatly to what became a
very special event for us, our children,
grandchildren and great-grandchildren.
Please receive our most hearty thanks
and return blessing.

Lena and James Joosse
Ingersoll, Ontario

Wedding

With joy and thankfulness to God,
Dave & Ina Sanders of Woodstock and John & Margaret Zylstra of St. Thomas,
announce the forthcoming marriage of their children:

Katie Sanders and Jeffrey Zylstra

The wedding will take place on Friday, September 29, 2006 D.V. @ 5:30 p.m.
Maranatha Christian Reformed Church, Woodstock

Anniversaries

Thankful for the Lord's goodness and faithfulness to our parents and grandparents,
we are delighted to celebrate the **45th Wedding Anniversary** of

JOHN AND GRACE DE JONG
(nee Boeyenga)

Congratulations Mom & Dad!
We look forward to our bon voyage.
May God bless you and keep you
for many years to come.

Deb & Mike Hampson, Courtice
Hailey, Melanie
Teresa & Willy Katerberg, Guelph
Devin, Rhianne, Carlin
Sandra & Brad Kelly, Caledonia
Jassin

Trish De Jong, Stoney Creek

Best wishes can be sent to:
36 Callander Dr
Guelph ON N1E 4H5



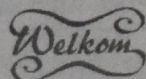
For Rent

Renovated, spacious 1-bedroom
basement apartment for rent in
St. Catharines, close to Brock
University. Nice area. Suitable for
quiet person. \$595/mo.
905-988-3882

House for Rent - 3 bedroom + den,
1-1/2 storey, large attached garage,
located in the country, central to
London, Woodstock, Tillsonburg,
and St. Thomas.
\$750.00 per month plus utilities.
Phone No: **519-269-3939**

Vacation

HOLIDAY IN HOLLAND
Self-contained cottage in Friesland.
Sleeps four/five persons. Contact
sj.kalma@planet.nl



GEORGIAN BAY
Housekeeping cottages for rent.
Minutes from Killbear Park.
One 3 bedroom, two 2 bedroom.
905-887-0304,
info@jacknifecottages.com.
Take advantage of our
off peak season rates!

1956 September 21 2006

With praise and
thanksgiving to God,
we hope to celebrate the
50th Wedding Anniversary
of our parents and grandparents:

HILBERT AND DINY RUMPH
(nee Drost)

With love,
Alfred & Helene Rumph
Drayton, Ontario
Jacqueline & Ron Vanderwees
Winkler, Manitoba
Bernice & Gerard Hofzyer
Londesborough, Ontario
Nancy Rumph
Guelph, Ontario
Arnold & Teresa Rumph
Drayton, Ontario
and 13 grandchildren

An **Open House**
will be held Saturday,
September 23rd, 2006
from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.
in the Fellowship Hall of
the Christian Reformed Church,
Drayton, Ontario.
Best Wishes Only

Home address: Box 4,
Drayton ON N0G 1P0



Sept. 14, 1956 Clinton

Sept. 14, 2006 Blyth

MURRAY AND DOREEN SIERTSEMA (Dykstra)

With thankful hearts we hope to celebrate our
50th Anniversary together with family and friends.

Bert & Betty-Ann Sierstema - Albert, Lee, Emi, Blyth ON
Mike & Deb Sierstema - Luke, Mark, Meghan, Natalie, Shannon, Blyth ON
Steve Sierstema - Ainsleigh, Mitchell ON
Anita & Mike Langdon - Mitchell, Nicholas, Woodstock ON
Yolanda & Darin Culbert - Evan, Jade, Faith, Chase, Goderich ON

An **Open House** will be held in the Blyth CRC
from 2-4 p.m. on September 23/06.
Best Wishes only please.

Home address: 457 Gypsy Lane PO Box 368,
Blyth ON N0M 1H0

1966

2006

With thanks to the LORD,

MARTIN AND JENNY OLDENGARM

celebrate their **40th Wedding Anniversary** and
Martin's 65th Birthday.

They and their children,
Jonathan Oldengarm & Naomi Struik,
invite you to a time of celebration.

Concert starts at 2:00 p.m., followed by an
Open House, on Saturday, October 7, 2006, LORD willing.
First United Church in Waterloo,
located at King at William, near the Waterloo Town Square.

Instead of gifts, we would appreciate donations to one of
the following: *Canadian Food Grains Bank,*
The Gideons, or Worldwide Christian Schools

Home address: #310 - 20 St. George Street
Kitchener ON N2G 2S7
E-mail: martin.oldengarm.cfo@sympatico.ca

Please let us know if you plan to come.

Classifieds /Job Opportunities

Obituaries

ANNIE BROEKEMA (nee Hartholt)

Passed away suddenly on August 13, 2006

The family is comforted in knowing that she is now in the presence of her LORD & Savior.

Beloved wife of Dick

Dear Mother of: Jim (Anita) Broekema
Albert (Brenda) Broekema
Renee (Mike) Power

Oma to Ryan, Mike, Derek, Josh, Megan & Justin

Correspondence: Dick Broekema
81 Dennison Avenue, Brampton ON L6S 1E9

LUCY (LUTSKE) HOGETERP (nee Visser)

March 24, 1921 July 12, 2006
Achum, Friesland Holland Chr. Homes
the Netherlands Brampton, Ontario

Lucy peacefully graduated to glory in her 86th year. She was devoted to her LORD and to her family.

We thank God for her life and we look forward to seeing her again.

Predeceased by her beloved husband Peter (1991) and two small children

Loved mom, grandma, and great-grandma of: Fran & Fred Spoelstra, Ancaster, Ont.

Phil & Chrissy Spoelstra - Elijah, Naomi, Tessa

Rachel & Tony De Gazon - Isaiah, Josiah, Elliah

Mylana & Ben Goheen

Rose & Dave Zimmer, Hebron Ky, USA

Erin & Devin Woiteshek

Peter

Heather & Nate Verst

Kasara Sinclair, Hamilton, Ont.

Reta & Dan Marsh, Union, Ky. USA

Paul, Bryan, Abigail

Beloved sister of:

Meije, Ruurd (predeceased), Jikke, Betty,

Frances (predeceased), George & Claire

The funeral was held on Friday, July 28/06

at 2 p.m. at the Jarvis Chr. Ref. Church.

Rev. H. Praamsma officiated.

Correspondence address: Fran Spoelstra
673 Iroquois Ave, Ancaster ON L9G 3B6

IN MEMORY OF

MAX HOFSTRA

of Rimbey, Alberta, Canada
September 29, 1929 - August 1, 2006
II Corinthians 5:1

affectionately remembered by his wife
Ge (Dykema) of 50 years

His children and grandchildren:

Barb & Robert Abma (Edmonton, AB)

Scott (Edmonton, AB)

Lisa & Steve DeVries (Neerlandia, AB)

Shirley & Ted Van Tienhoven (Airdrie, AB)

Dawn & Cameron Buschert (Didsbury, AB)

Mark & (Sarah Drost)

David, Laura, Carrie & Jessica

Andre Braak (Leslieville, AB)

Anthony, Matthew, Amanda, Michelle

John & Carolyn Hofstra (Rimbey, AB)

Devon, Caley, Logan

Seth

Four sisters and five brothers in Holland.

Predeceased by one grandson, one

daughter in Rimbey, and parents,

three sisters, three brothers in Holland.

Donations may be made to:

THE CANADIAN CANCER SOCIETY

Home address: Box 152

Rimbey AB T0C TJ0

*To everything there is a season
and a time to every purpose under heaven.
A time to be born and a time to die.*
Ecclesiastes 3:1,2a

JAN GLAS

In the assured knowledge that nothing
"can separate us from the love of God,
which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8)
my dearly loved husband Jan went
to his eternal home in his 78th year.

Anne Glas (nee Van Harten)

A loving father to: John Glas Jr.

Robert & Susan Glas

Imka & Neil Weedon

Grandfather to:

Aarjen, Jameson and Christian Glas

Pyke and Benjamin Weedon

Brother to: Harry & Hilda Glas (predeceased)

Neil & Rena Glas

Ann & Morris Vellekoop

Alice & Kees Kooy

Jan died of ALS at his home on July 22,
2006. He endured his disease with quiet
patience, dignity and grace. He will so
dearly be missed.

Let us cherish the ones we have with
us and remember always, always, the
ones we have lost.

Correspondence: Anne Glas

45 Kingknoll Dr, Brampton ON L6Y 5P2

Do you have skills in leadership and music? Do you
have a passion for blended worship?

GRACE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

of Scarborough is looking for

a **part-time music director** (12 - 15 hrs/wk)

to lead and develop its music ministries.

For more information, email gracecrc@planeteeer.com
or call 416-293-0373.

The **AYLMER CRC** is seeking a dynamic and energetic
individual to become our

youth director

The successful candidate will be an individual who
personifies a mature Christian and is able to develop a
rapport with youth. To apply for this opportunity please
submit your resume by mail to

The YMD Search Comm

c/o Mrs. Christine Helder

R.R.#1 Aylmer, ON N5H-2R1

or by e-mail to helder@amtelecom.net

**DYKSTRA BROS. ROOFING**

(1992 LTD)

Free Estimates

R. R. # 1 Beamsville, On L0R 1B0

Fax: 905-563-0301

Phone: 905-563-7374

Do you know someone
who may enjoy reading the Christian Courier?

Let us know their name and address and we will send
the next four issues to them at no cost.

Call Rose at 1-800-969-4838 or email: rose@christiancourier.ca

Farm position available

Wanted: A Christian female who likes farm life, light farm du-
ties, in return for board, single or widow, in late 20's or early
thirties, can be employed. Apply in person.

Phone 519-327-8954
to make an appointment

Events**PRAYER HEALING SERVICE**

Saturday, September 23,
7:00 p.m.

Meadowlands Fellowship
Christian Reformed Church
211 Stonehenge Drive
Ancaster

for details call:

(905)528-0353

September 17
3:00 p.m

A DUTCH SERVICE will be held in the
Ancaster Christian
Reformed Church

Rev. Jacob Kuntz will be preaching.

**Principal Opening**

beginning August 2007

**CLINTON AND DISTRICT
CHRISTIAN SCHOOL**

is looking for a dynamic leader with a
passion for Christian Education and a
reformed worldview. We are implement-
ing a strategic plan and have qualified
for Canadian Hallmarks accreditation.

Our desire is to promote CDCS as the
educational choice for the Christian community. CDCS offers
JK - 8 and educates approximately 170 students.

Interested candidates should send a cover letter, resume,
statement of faith, and philosophy of Christian education to

CDCS Box 658, Clinton, ON N0M 1L0

attn: Principal Search Committee

by December 1, 2006. Website www.clintonchristian.ca

Groningen
The Neth.

Surrey
BC

1920 - 2006

Peacefully in her sleep on August 10, 2006, our
dear mom, oma and great-grandmother

ANJE BUS HAVINGA

went to be with her LORD.

We are thankful for her long life, her love for us,
her strong faith, her daily prayers for us, her warm
hospitality and her countless letters and cards.

Beloved mother of:

Pia & Jake Ypma, Enderby, BC

Esther & David, Patrick,

Ingrid & Aaron

Corrie & John Kamphof, Cobble Hill, BC

Eric, Joel, Nathan & Salome

Bill Bus, Thunder Bay, ON

3 great-grandchildren

Predeceased by:

her husband Willem in December 1999

and a granddaughter Kerri-Anne in 1973.

Correspondence address:

Corrie Kamphof, Box 126

Cobble Hill BC V0R 1L0

E-mail: jckamphof@hotmail.com

See our website for issue dates and
deadlines, job opportunities, and
advertising rates.

www.christiancourier.ca

**Maple
Reinders**

www.maple.ca

Are you interested in a dynamic
construction process?

Would you like the opportunity to
expand your career?

Does the idea of taking on a
technically complex project
excite you?

If you answered yes to any of these questions then we want to meet you!

We are currently accepting
applications from seasoned:

- Project Managers
- Project Coordinators
- Site Superintendents
- Estimators
- Business Development Professionals

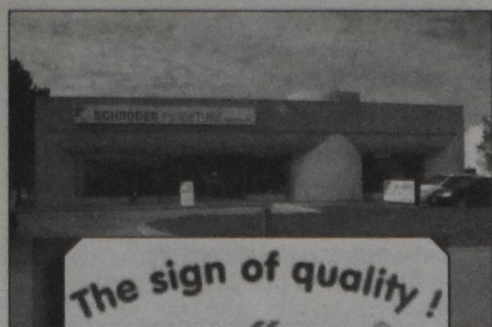
HOW TO APPLY:

E-mail resumes to Bert Hofland,
Human Resources Manager
bhofland@maple.ca
or Fax: 905-821-4822

Our office locations:

Mississauga | Cambridge | Calgary | Edmonton | Mississauga | Kelowna | Richmond

Classifieds



The sign of quality!
SCHRÖDER
 FURNITURE
 Canada Ltd.

Do you have problems
 getting out of your existing
 furniture?

Is your sofa wearing soft?

Our Coil Spring
 Constuction gives you a
 lifetime of
painfree comfort

At Schroder furniture you can find
 exceptional **Quality** and **long**
lasting Seating Comfort.



Come and visit us at
 2140 Dunwin Dr.
 Mississauga, Ontario
905-828-9511
www.schroderfurniture.com

THE LIBERATION CHOIR EXPANDS:

THE LIBERATION CHOIR IS LOOKING FOR MEMBERS FOR THE NEW
 BURLINGTON CHAPTER as well as new members for the well established
 BRAMPTON CHAPTER

that presently has 130 members in order to create a mixed choir of 200-250 voices.
**PRACTISE IN BURLINGTON COMMENCES AT THE CROSSROADS CTS CHAPEL ON
 NORTH SERVICE ROAD ON MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2006**

**PRACTISE IN BRAMPTON COMMENCES AT THE SECOND CHRISTIAN REFORMED
 CHURCH ON STEELES AND MCLAUGHLIN ON MONDAY, AUGUST 28 AND THEREAFTER
 MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2006**

Our practices are from 7:30 till 10:00 p.m. Rehearsals in Brampton will be every first and third Monday
 and in Burlington every second and fourth Monday of the month with some exceptions.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT OUR WEBSITE: www.liberationchoir.com

CONTACT US BY: e-mail: willem@pianos.ca or Call: 905 520 0207
 or speak to one of our present or past choir members.

Low interest rates getting you down?

If you're over 65, have you considered
 a charitable gift annuity?

- ♦ Wonderful income - as high as 10%
- ♦ Largely tax exempt
- ♦ An charitable receipt for at least 20% of the annuity amount.
- ♦ This lasts as long as you live
- ♦ Worry free
- ♦ Benefits the charities of your choice

Never heard of a gift annuity? Call for a no-obligation quotation or
 have a child or grandchildren call on your behalf.

Link Charity
 Canada Inc.

45 Harriet St. Toronto
 Ontario M4L 2G1
Ph: 1-800-387-8146
 Fax: 416-465-6367

www.linkcharity.ca Email: info@linkcharity.ca



**DIACONAL
 MINISTRIES
 CANADA**

DAY OF ENCOURAGEMENT

October 21, 2006

Celebrating our God while becoming equipped for ministry. It is an opportunity
 for all deacons, elders and all other church members to be encouraged, inspired
 and trained for service. It happens at Hamilton District Christian High School in
 Ancaster.

Theme: Come to the Water

Choose from 49 workshops and 15 Service Sites. Cost \$50. Contact your deacons for a registration
 form or contact Diaconal Ministries at **(905) 336-2920**.

More details are available at www.diaconalministries.com.

Connecting Donors, Charities, & Ministries

Interested in a **GUARANTEED** Income?

Want to **SAVE** Tax?

Interested in leaving a **LEGACY**?

CSS has been offering Charitable Gift Annuities (CGA) for over 25 years.
 If you are over the age of 65 then a CGA may be for you.

Please contact our office for a confidential, no-obligation quote.
1-800-267-8890; admin@cssservices.ca

CHRISTIAN
Stewardship
 SERVICES

Suite 214A- 500 Alden Road
 Markham, ON L3R 5H5
www.cssservices.ca

MARANATHA
HOMES
 living independently in Christian community

Maranatha Homes, located in south Burlington near many
 amenities, is a place where Christian seniors can enjoy independent
 living in community with others. The Home's newly renovated units
 and award winning architectural design, combined with its reasonable
 rent rates make Maranatha an attractive and affordable accommodation
 for seniors.

For further information contact:

Rosanne van der Woerd,
 109-3260 New St.
 Burlington, On. L7N 3L4

Ph: **905-681-0311** Email: rvanderwoerd@sympatico.ca

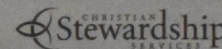


A charitable gift annuity offers:



- the peace of mind of a guaranteed lifetime income, largely tax free
- the satisfaction of knowing that you will be providing a future gift
 for Redeemer University College

Blended rate of 6 - 10% (capital returned & interest) for those over 65.
 Please contact us for your own confidential, no-obligation quote.
 Information available on other gift-planning
 options as well.



Redeemer University College 777 Garner Road East, Ancaster, Ontario L9K 1J4
 905-648-2139 ext. 4205 (Ben) stewardship@redeemer.on.ca

Wallaceburg Bookbinding

& MFG CO LTD



We Bind, Rebind and Restore
 Save money- Don't buy replacements!

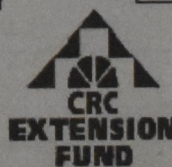
Churches: Send us one of your hymnals as a sample and we will rebind it at no cost. *Normal price for
 quantities of five or more-\$7.50* **Personal Orders:** We will bind short run editions e.g. family histories as
 well as rebinding and restoring personal books.

1-800
 95 Arnold St. Wallaceburg ON N8A 3P3

FAX (519)627-6922
<http://wbmbindery.com>



★ 35 YEARS OF SERVICE ★



"...serving Christian
 Reformed churches
 and Christian
 schools since 1970"

Your funds will be invested in Christian
 Reformed Church and Christian school building
 projects in Canada.

RATES TO September 30, 2006
 Ext. fund: we pay 4.5%
 RRSP: you earn approx. 5.1%

Write: Christian Reformed Extension Fund
 45 Harriet St, Toronto ON M4L 2G1
Fax: 416-465-6367 Call: 416-461-1207

Events/Advertising

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Items appearing in this column are run free of charge if they advertise an admission-free event, if they accompany an ad for the same event, or at the discretion of CC. In case of free listing, space limitations apply. The charge otherwise is \$7.50 per line, or \$1.50 per 1/3 line, per insertion

Sep 11 Practices for Liberation choir, (Burlington area) 7.30 PM, Crossroads CTS Chapel, North Service Road, **Burlington** ON E-mail Willem: willem@pianos.ca or Phone Tjitske (905)520 0207 or Lucie (905) 877 8339. www.liberationchoir.com New members needed!

Sep 17 Dutch Service will be held in the **Ancaster** Christian Reformed Church at 3:00 p.m. Rev. Jacob Kuntz will be preaching.

Sep 23 Prayer Healing Service, 7:00 pm, Meadowlands Fellowship CRC, 211 Stonehenge Drive, **Ancaster**. For details call: (905)528-0353

Sep 23 Quinte Christian High School opening celebration. 1-4 p.m. See ad this page for more information.

Oct 9, 20 First annual Christian Stewardship Services planned giving conference and membership meeting. For details see website: www.csservices.ca

Oct 21 Day of Encouragement - Celebrating our God while becoming equipped for ministry. It is an opportunity for all deacons, elders and all other church members to be encouraged, inspired and trained for service. It happens at Hamilton District Christian High School in **Ancaster**. Theme: Come to the Water. Choose from 49 workshops and 15 Service Sites. Cost \$50. Contact your deacons for a registration form or contact Diaconal Ministries at (905) 336-2920. More details are available at www.diaconalministries.com.

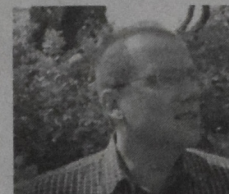
Oct 27-29 Hamilton District Christian High School 50th anniversary weekend. For information about activities or to register as alumni: www.hdch.org or 905.648.6655



The Institute for Christian Studies
invites you to an Academic Convocation featuring
the Inaugural Address of

John Suk

ICS President
(former Editor of the Banner)



"When Knowledge and Compassion Embrace"

and the conferring of an
honorary D.Litt. upon Gerald Vandezande

Friday, October 20, 2006 at 8:00 pm
Toronto, Ontario

For location and more information please visit our website at www.icscanada.edu
or contact Robbin Burry at 416-979-2331 ext. 234 (rburry@icscanada.edu)

valentine

A Division of Merit Vacations

MARTINAIR SPECIAL
SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER FLIGHTS

FROM **389.00** taxes 198.00
specific dates only

National car rental offers free car upgrade

Mississauga 905-890-5333 or 1-800-268-6144

London 519-472-2700 or 1-800-265-1141

TICO Registration #4499356

ADA REALTY LTD

2011-137 Ave. Suite 404
Edmonton AB T5A 4W2

780-473-8149

Sid Vandermeulen

Contact us first
when you think of moving
to Edmonton & district.
Home of confidence

ISRAEL

A "Mission of Hope" Tour

11 exciting days

February 19 - March 1, 2007

Cost: \$ 2595.00 pp ex. Tor. dbl occ.
plus dep. taxes

Stop-over in Holland possible.

Emphasis on:

Prayer for the country; meditations,
Wonderful sightseeing in Jerusalem,
Bethlehem, Nazareth, Jericho etc.

Personally escorted by:
Rev. John G. Klomps

**For complete information and reservation
please call or write:**

Rev. John G. Klomps
Advantage Meadowvale Travel
2283 Argentia Rd, Unit 9B
Mississauga ON L5N 5Z2

Tel: 905 - 858 - 1700; toll free: 1- 800 - 755 - 0367

Fax: 905 - 858 - 1704

e-mail: jklomps@sympatico.ca

Reg. # 2431171

TRYATER



BEPPE TRYNTSJE
in teatrale vertelling

fr 22 sept.	8.00 pm	Theatre Woodstock	WOODSTOCK	Reservations
sn 23 sept.	3.30 pm	Theatre Woodstock	WOODSTOCK	519-537-2582
to 28 sept.	7.00 pm	Holland Christian Homes	BRAMPTON	905-463-7002 ext 262
fr 29 sept.	7.00 pm	Holland Christian Homes	BRAMPTON	905-463-7002 ext 262
wo 4 okt.	7.00 pm	Tollendale Village	BARRIE	705-735-6176
to 5 okt.	7.00 pm	Durham Homes	WHITBY	905-668-8681
fr 6 okt.	7.00 pm	Durham Homes	WHITBY	905-668-8681

Spilers Klaasje Postma, Freark Smink Regy Hans Man in't Veld Technyk Klaas Ploegh

QUINTE CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL
Grand Opening Celebration

Saturday September 23

1:00 - 2:00 P.M. Official Opening Ceremony

2:00 - 4:00 P.M. Open House/Tours

138 Wallbridge Loyalist Road, Belleville, Ontario

613-968-7870

admin@qchs.ca

www.qchs.ca



EUROPE & WORLDWIDE

DCA Travel & Cruise

Toll-free

1-800-667-2525

E-mail:

info@dca-travel.com

Amsterdam from

\$499 + tax

•Flights •Cruises

• All inclusive

Holiday Packages

ON SALE

TORONTO 416-224-5211

Best insurance coverage-

lowest price.

Call today.



EUROPE & WORLDWIDE

DCA Travel & Cruise

News

Poland takes conservative turn under twin leaders



Andrew Curry

WARSAW – Polish President Lech Kaczynski swore his identical twin brother Jaroslaw in as prime minister last month in what some saw as a long-delayed victory for Poland's have-nots but others see as a defeat for the liberalism that was bringing Poland closer to the rest of Europe.

Their Law and Justice party (PiS) has talked about giving Poland a new start. The brothers focused on a populist vision of the future during their campaign last fall, promising to build subsidized housing for 3 million families in the next eight years, reform a public-finance system that has been plagued by corruption scandals, and slow the privatization of Poland's remaining state companies. They also want a ban on abortion and to distance Poland from the European Union, which the country joined in 2004.

But it's their focus on the wrongs of the past that has generated the most controversy – and passion. Many Poles see the twins as Poland's best chance finally to overcome the legacy of communism. Unlike East Germany and Czechoslovakia, Poles chose not to open secret-police files and expose communist collaborators in the early 1990s. Forgiveness was supposed to offer a fresh start. Instead, the decision resulted in 15 years of leaks, career-ruining rumors, conspiracy theories, and a lingering sense of bitterness.

The Kaczynskis promise to open the files and remove anyone from public life who secretly cooperated with the communist authorities. The effort has been widely criticized. Some are concerned the files are unreliable; others say the whole issue is a distracting sideshow – charges that Law and Justice denies.

"Collaboration, informing on other people, is treason. It's morally vicious," says Ryszard Legutko, a member of the Law and Justice party. "This isn't a side issue; it's a principal issue that should have been solved long ago."

The coalition's strongest support still comes from Poles who lost out in the transition to democracy. Poland's unemployment rate is nearly 20 percent, dividing a few booming cities and rural areas still locked in poverty. Two-thirds of rural Poles voted for Lech Kaczynski in the presidential election; elderly voters and people with no high school education voted for him in even higher numbers. But most of Poland's young people voted for Kaczynski's opponent in last year's presidential elections, and in big cities the party's support is weak. "They're no good. They'll do a lot of harm," says Warsaw law student Bartek Karolczyk.

Yet with local elections coming up this fall, Law and Justice seems poised to gain even more ground. Even though the twins control only a third of the seats

in Parliament, their opposition has so far failed to come up with a vision to mobilize voters.

"To be against, one has to have an alternative, and neither the left nor [the] Civic Platform [party] are able to articulate what they'd do differently," says University of Warsaw sociologist Mirosława Grabowska.

When it comes to concrete accomplishments, the brothers have floundered, abandoning campaign promises like subsidized housing. Experts suggest that the transition from opposition to leadership may be part of the problem. "It's not always possible to complain. They're concerned with lustration, but they haven't done anything with privatization, health care, or education," says University of Warsaw political scientist Wawrzyniec Konarski. "They're not concentrating on real reform, just making promises. Their policy is to hunt for scapegoats for policies that failed." In interviews, the brothers' former boss Lech Walesa has been equally critical of the president. "His approach is to first destroy and then think about what to build."

With local elections coming up in the fall, Poles are watching closely to see if the brothers make serious changes. And despite their hostility to the European Union, their government will certainly be buoyed by about \$60 billion in funds due from the EU in the next five years.

The presidency is the culmination of a long public career for Lech Kaczynski. After communism fell in 1989, Lech rose to the top ranks of government, becoming minister of justice.

His brother Jaroslaw, however, is the political strategist. Active behind the scenes in the Solidarity movement, he later helped found the Law and Justice party in 2001, masterminding the party's rapid rise. "Jaroslaw has always been the one with a political brain," says Mr. Konarski. "His goal is to form a strong national party that could dominate Polish politics for decades."

Now there's little to stop the twins from introducing their own brand of conservatism to Polish politics. Last year's parliamentary elections were a narrow victory for their party over Civic Platform, another right-leaning party with a more liberal economic program. Since neither party had a majority, voters expected a "grand coalition," mixing the anticorruption, anticommunist passions of the Kaczynskis with the free-market, pro-European economics of Civic Platform.

Instead, the Kaczynskis swung even further right, forming a tense alliance with the populist, anti-EU Self-Defense Party and the ultra-Catholic League of Polish Families. Experts say their conservative campaign rhetoric went a long way toward building popular support.

Deft political maneuvering didn't hurt, either. Days before the presidential runoff election last year, they landed the endorsement of ultraconservative Catholic Radio Marja – by all accounts a huge boost. "The main source of support was Radio Marja," says Krzysztof Bobinski, vice president of the Unia and Poland think tank. "Now they have serious obligations."

Together with attacking the communist past, the brothers "stressed that the fruits of development should be divided more equally," says Ms. Grabowska.

Andrew Curry is a correspondent for *The Christian Science Monitor*

News Digest

On the anniversary of the destruction of New Orleans there has been a lot of soul searching in the U.S. Large parts of the city are still in ruins, reconstruction is only beginning and the levees are far from ready to take the onslaught of another hurricane.

The Army Corps of Engineers is not inspiring much confidence, so *Newsweek* asks, Why aren't the bureaucrats asking the world experts in dike-building – the Dutch – for a helping hand? In fact, why not hire them to do the job?

Newsweek writes: "Hans Vrijling, a renowned authority on flood control who designed part of the Dutch system, says it should be possible to protect New Orleans – even low-lying sections – from storm surges more than 10 times Katrina's. The price tag: less than \$10 billion."

The Dutch can do it cheaper, claims *Newsweek*, and the levees would withstand a much fiercer storm surge. The U.S. engineers are looking into the possibility, but, as we all know, studying levees takes time. They've been studying the New Orleans levees for decades.

Astronomers, too, have been studying. At last their attention has turned from stars, galaxies and black holes to the planets of our solar system. And they decided to get tough. They got rid of one of the runts in the litter. Pluto has been cast out from the august company of planets, reducing the number of planets orbiting around our sun from nine to eight.

It all has to do with size apparently. I suspect that this will spark all sorts of protest, for it is clearly a case of discrimination. The little people are sweating with anxiety. "Are we next?" they are asking. "Will we be dropped from the category of homo sapiens because of our size?"

I've often thought it rather arbitrary anyhow to class human beings as animals. What resemblance is there, for instance, between me and an elephant, on the one hand, and between me and a worm, on the other. (No allegorization, please.)

Color the Green Party green – with envy. After their recent convention, they seem to have selected as their rallying cry: Down with NAFTA! (That's the North American Free Trade Agreement.) It sounded very much like they plan to exploit the anti-Americanism always latent in the Canadian electorate. It's a classic case of the runt of the litter envying the tall handsome one. The beaver gnawing at the leg of tall Uncle Sam.

Remember Rick Mercer's One-Tonne Challenge? The Liberal answer to Kyoto? It has been branded phony. It would apparently have done little to help Canada meet its Kyoto commitment. The ad program did, however, cost a tonne – \$26 million.

I always wondered about the strategy of promoting a program that requires serious and painful reduction by hiring a comedian. Maybe the idea was that we'd meet the challenge of global climate change laughing uproariously. Canada's version of *The Divine Comedy*.

Good news for politicians, CEOs and other important people. Those on the low end of the totem pole, those who do menial jobs, age faster. If you thought that doing physical work adds years to your life, think again. It's because those in a low-class job suffer more stress, say the experts.

But aren't those on the top always complaining that they are suffering more stress because they have greater responsibilities?

The lesson: avoid menial jobs and live longer. A warning to husbands: don't even try using this as an excuse for dodging yard work. Your wife will tell you in no uncertain terms what will enable you to live longer!